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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This combined edition of *Modern American Poetry* and *Modern British Poetry* has been prepared in response to a persistent demand on the part of teachers, students, and librarians. It is not a condensation of the two books nor, in any sense, a selection from them; both volumes appear as in the latest revised edition.

The advantages of the combined edition are obvious. There is, first of all, the physical convenience of having both books together. The opportunities for rapid survey and intensive study are greatly increased. The more important poets of the period are emphasized by the number of poems and the space allotted to them. The differences between British and American tendencies since 1830 can be seen far more readily. A comparison of the poetry of the two English-speaking nations may be made through an examination of the separate prefaces as well as of the individual poets. In the American section there are 730 poems by 153 poets; in the British section 760 poems by 150 poets. Thus this volume of 1640 pages includes 1490 poems by 303 poets since 1830, beginning with Emily Dickinson, in America, and with Christina Rossetti, in England.

Certain dates and bibliographical details have been added, bringing the critical notes up to date. Otherwise no changes in the text have been made.

MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

(FOURTH REVISED EDITION)

A FOREWORD

To the Fourth Revised Edition

Although there are countless collections of verse, there are only two types of anthologies. The one limits itself to the work of fifteen or twenty poets of a given period; the other, presuming to present the period itself, does not confine itself to the obvious names. The former is exclusive, the latter inclusive. The first, concentrated and particular, has the advantage of presenting more detailed study; the second, emphasizing range and difference, has the advantage of a panoramic survey. This volume belongs to the second division in its endeavor to picture a rather extensive epoch, to reflect the rise and fall of certain tendencies and to show, besides the presence of a few imposing figures, the emergence of many whose work, not impressive in mass, is interesting and even significant in detail. But though its chief purpose is scope and variety, the new edition more than previous ones, emphasizes the fifteen or twenty poets who may well be considered outstanding. Not only have the notes been considerably extended, but the pages given to their poems have been multiplied. The space devoted to Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Carl Sandburg, Léonie Adams, Elinor Wylie, T. S. Eliot (to name the most obvious) almost doubles that of preceding editions.

Five years having elapsed since the 1925 printing, corrections, re-appraisals and additions were inevitable. Certain poets—Robinson Jeffers, Archibald MacLeish, Hart Crane, Allen Tate, Merrill Moore, Malcolm Cowley, Langston Hughes, Phelps Putnam, Robert Penn Warren, among others—are represented in these pages for the first time although some of them appeared in a preparatory textbook (*Modern American and British Poetry*) issued by the editor in 1928.

Yet, in spite of its inclusiveness, this collection is likely to offend many because of its omissions. This cannot be helped, nor could it be avoided even in a work of encyclopedic pro-

portions. Concerning himself for the moment with living poets (and this volume is principally occupied with contemporary poetry), the reader may gain some idea of the quantity of verse produced in the United States when he learns that, during the past decade, there was an annual average of five hundred volumes of poetry and drama. Besides this flood of actual books, there were at various times since 1912, more than thirty magazines devoted exclusively to the publishing of verse. Though the death-rate among these gallant *ephemerae* was rather high, there were no less than fourteen poetry magazines appearing in 1924, among which any critic of the recent renaissance will have to consider the veteran *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* (the first in the field), *The Measure,* which was to New York what Miss Monroe's monthly was to Chicago, *The Fugitive,* that sharper, more individualized organ of a group of young Southerners. Nor is this all. There is scarcely a general magazine published today that does not allot a generous portion of its pages to the poems of a surprisingly lyrical generation. The reader will realize, therefore, that were this volume to be expanded into a set twice the size of Mr. Braithwaite's hardy annual Anthologies of Magazine Verse, there would still be many a county outraged to find its own sweet singer among the missing. In the end every editor is driven back upon that mixture of prejudice, preference and intuition known as personal taste—and there seems no way of escaping the limitations imposed by one's temperament.

Fortunately, one can be more definite in regard to the other features of the volume. To begin with, there is the matter of arrangement. It might have been entertaining to divide the contents into distinct groups and schools. Unfortunately, such a scheme would have given impressions as false as they would have been contradictory. One should not ticket contemporary writers with conclusive labels, especially since so many of them are still developing. One cannot give a true picture of a period in the state of flux except by showing its fluid character. It has been the editor's aim to reflect this flux and diversity.

Something has already been said concerning the inclusions, as well as the omissions. There are one or two amplifications to be added. Firstly, the fact that a poem has appeared in anthologies other than this one has not prejudiced me against it. A good poem remains a good poem, no matter how often it is

reprinted. On the other hand, it should be admitted that where the choice has been between a much-quoted poem and one which has not been handed on from one anthologist to another, I have—where both poems were equally worthy—favored the less familiar example. Secondly, since this is a collection which attempts to chart a period, I have included various examples of those who have been dismissed as "mere experimenters," believing that experimentation is as vital a process of creation—and surely as significant a part of this age—as the unvarying acceptance of tradition. This same spirit has also impelled me to go to the other extreme—to reprint a small portion of that species which lies between light verse and authentic poetry, believing again that no survey of the period, no matter how casual, would be complete without the negro dialect of Irwin Russell and Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Hoosier accents of James Whitcomb Riley, the light patter of Eugene Field, the metropolitan chuckles of Franklin P. Adams, the Italian-American patois of T. A. Daly. In this welter of broken syllables, we have fresh evidence that America has become a melting-pot in the poetic as well as the ethnic use of the term.

One thing remains to be said. Although the notes as well as the number of poems selected make the editor's preferences obvious, it should be added that he has attempted to make each poet's group representative. To accomplish this, not only the early but the most recent writing of the contemporaries appears here—some of it for the first time between covers. Wherever possible, the selections as well as the authors have been chronologically arranged; that is, the earlier work is placed at the beginning of each group, the later work following in approximately the order in which it was written. I am greatly indebted to most of the living poets, not only for invaluable data, but for their collaborative assistance: many of the following pages embody their choice of their own poems as well as the editor's preferences.

Finally, I am grateful to the many publishers who have, in every instance, displayed a generosity and coöperation without which the successive editions of this volume would not have been possible. This indebtedness is alphabetically acknowledged to the following firms, as holders of the copyrights:

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PREFACE

THE CIVIL WAR—AND AFTER

The end of the Civil War marked the end of a literary epoch. The New England group, containing (if Poe and Whitman could be added) all the great names of the antebellum period, began to disintegrate. The poets had outsung themselves; it was a time of surrender and swan-songs. Unable to respond to the new forces of political nationalism and industrial reconstruction, the Brahmins (that famous group of intellectuals who had dominated literary America) withdrew into their libraries. Poets like Longfellow, Bryant, Taylor, turned their eyes away from the native scene, rhapsodized endlessly about Europe, echoed the "parlor poetry" of England, or left creative writing altogether and occupied themselves with translations. "They had been borne into an era in which they had no part," writes Fred Lewis Pattee (*A History of American Literature Since 1870*), "and they contented themselves with reechoings of the old music." For them poetry ceased to be a reflection of actuality, "an extension of experience." Within a single period of six years, from 1867 to 1872, there appeared Longfellow's *Divina Commedia*, C. E. Norton's *Vita Nuova*, T. W. Parsons' *Inferno*, William Cullen Bryant's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Bayard Taylor's *Faust*.

Suddenly the break came. America developed a national consciousness; the West discovered itself, and the East discovered the West. Grudgingly at first, the aristocratic leaders made way for a new expression; crude, jangling, vigorously democratic. The old order was changing with a vengeance. All the preceding writers—poets like Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Holmes—were not only products of the New England colleges, but typically "Boston gentlemen of the early Renaissance." To them the new men must have seemed like a regiment recruited from the ranks of vulgarity. Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, John Hay, Joaquin Miller, Joel Chandler

Harris, James Whitcomb Riley—these were men who had graduated from the farm, the frontier, the mine, the pilot-house, the printer's shop! For a while, the movement seemed of little consequence; the impact of Whitman and the Westerners was averted. The poets of the transition, with a deliberate art, ignored the surge of a spontaneous national expression. They were even successful in holding it back. But it was gathering force.

THE "POST-MORTEM" PERIOD

The nineteenth century, up to its last quarter, had been a period of new vistas and revolts: a period of protest and iconoclasm—the era of Shelley and Byron, the prophets of "liberty, equality and fraternity." It left no immediate heirs. In England, its successors by default were the lesser Victorians. In America, the intensity and power of men like Emerson and Whittier gave way to the pale romanticism and polite banter of the transition, or what might be called the "post-mortem" poets. "Much of our poetry," Thoreau wrote, "has the very best manners, but no character." These interim lyrists were frankly the singers of an indefinite reaction, reminiscently digging among the bones of a long-dead past. They burrowed and borrowed, half archeologists, half artisans, impelled not so much by the need of creating poetry as by the desire to write it.

From 1866 to 1880 the United States was in a chaotic and frankly materialistic condition; it was full of political scandals, panics, frauds, malfeasance in high places. The moral fiber was flabby; the country was apathetic, corrupt and contented. As in all such periods of national unconcern, the artists turned from life altogether, preoccupying themselves with the by-products of art: with method and technique, with elaborate and artificial conceits, with facile ideas rather than fundamental ideals.

Bayard Taylor, Thomas Buchanan Read, Richard Henry Stoddard, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Thomas Bailey Aldrich—all of these authors, in an effort to escape a reality they could not express and did not even wish to understand, fled to a more congenial realm of fantasy. They took the easiest routes to a prim and academic Arcadia, to a cloying and devitalized Orient or a mildly sensuous, treacle-dripping Greece. Their

verse, confessing its own defeat, was cluttered with silk divans, Astrakhans, Vesuvian Bays, burning deserts, Assyrian temples, Spanish cloths of gold. Originality was as far from their thoughts as thinking itself; they followed wherever Keats, Shelley (in his lesser lyrics) and Tennyson seemed to lead them. However, not being explorers themselves, they ventured no further than their predecessors, but remained politely in the rear, repeating dulcetly what they had learned from their greater guides—pronouncing it with little variety but with a vast and sentimental unction. In their desperate preoccupation with lures and legends overseas, they were not, except for the accident of birth, American at all; all of them owed much more to old England than to New England.

WALT WHITMAN

Whitman, who was to influence future generations so profoundly in Europe as well as in America, had already appeared. The third edition of that stupendous volume, *Leaves of Grass*, had been printed in 1860. Almost immediately after, the publisher failed and the book passed out of public notice. But private scrutiny was keen. In 1865 a petty official discovered that Whitman was the author of the "notorious" *Leaves of Grass* and, in spite of his sacrifice in nursing hundreds of wounded soldiers, in spite of his many past services and his present poverty, the offending poet was dismissed from his clerkship in the Department of the Interior at Washington, D. C. Other reverses followed rapidly. But Whitman, broken in health and cheated by his exploiters, lived to see not only a seventh edition of his great work published in 1881, but a complete collection printed in his seventy-third year (1892) in which the twelve poems of the experimental first edition had grown to nearly four hundred.

The influence of Whitman can scarcely be overestimated. It has touched every shore of letters, quickened every current of contemporary art. And yet, as late as 1900, Barrett Wendell in his *Literary History of America* could speak of Whitman's "eccentric insolence of phrase and temper," and, perturbed by the poet's increasing vogue across the Atlantic (Whitman had been hailed by men as eminent as Swinburne, Symonds, Rossetti), he was led to write such a preposterous sentence as

"In temperament and style he was an exotic member of that sterile brotherhood which eagerly greeted him abroad."

Such a judgment would be impossible today. Whitman has been acclaimed by a great and growing public, not only here but in England, Germany, Russia, Italy and France. He has been hailed as prophet, as pioneer, as rebel, as fiery humanist and, most frequently, as liberator. He is, in spite of the rhetorical flourish, the Lincoln of our literature. The whole scheme of *Leaves of Grass* is inclusive rather than exclusive; its form is elemental, dynamic, free.

Nor was it only in the relatively minor matter of form that Whitman became our great poetic emancipator. He led the way toward a wider aspect of democracy; he took his readers out of fusty, lamp-lit libraries into the coarse sunlight and the buoyant air. He was, as Burroughs wrote, preëminently the poet of vista; his work had the power "to open doors and windows, to let down bars rather than to put them up, to dissolve forms, to escape narrow boundaries, to plant the reader on a hill rather than in a corner." He could do this because, first of all, he believed implicitly in life—in its physical as well as its spiritual manifestations; he sought to grasp existence as a whole, not rejecting the things that, to other minds, had seemed trivial or tawdry. The cosmic and the commonplace were synonymous to him; he declared he was part of elemental, primitive things and constantly identified himself with them.

"What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest is Me."

And by "me" he meant any one. Whitman's entire work, which has so often been misunderstood as the outpourings of egotism, was never so much a celebration of himself as a glorification of the ordinary man.

It was this breadth, this jubilant acceptance, that made Whitman so keen a lover of casual and ordinary things; he was the first of our poets to reveal "the glory of the commonplace." He transmuted, by the intensity of his emotion, material which had been hitherto regarded as too unpoetic for poetry. His long poem "Song of Myself" is a magnificent example. Here his "barbaric yawp," sounded "over the roofs of the world," is softened, time and again, to express a lyric ecstasy and naïf wonder.

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre of the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow, crunching with depressed head, surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels!

It is this large naturalism, this affection for all that is homely and of the soil, that sets Whitman apart from his fellow craftsmen as our first American poet. This blend of familiarity and grandeur, this racy but religious mysticism animates all his work. It swings with tremendous vigor through "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; it sharpens the sturdy rhythms (and occasional rhymes) of the "Song of the Broad-Axe"; it beats sonorously through "Drum-Taps"; it whispers immortally through the "Memories of President Lincoln" (particularly that magnificent threnody "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"); it quickens the "Song of the Open Road" with what Tennyson called "the glory of going on," and lifts with a biblical solemnity "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking."

Whitman did not scorn the past; no one was quicker than he to see its wealth and glories. But most of the older flowerings belonged to their own era; they were foreign to our country—transplanted, they did not flourish on this soil. What was original with many transatlantic poets was being merely aped by facile and unoriginal bards in these States; they seemed bent on transforming poetry into a pedant's stroll through Bulfinch's *Age of Fable*. Concerned only with the myths of other and older countries, they were blind to the living legends of their own. In his "Song of the Exposition" Whitman wrote not only his own *credo*, but uttered the manifesto of the new generation—especially in these lines:

Come, Muse, migrate from Greece and Ionia.
Cross out, please, those immensely overpaid accounts;
That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus' wanderings;
Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus. . . .
For know that a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wider, untried domain awaits, demands you.

The final estimate of Whitman's work is yet to be written. Whitman's very universality defeated his commentators. To the craftsmen, Whitman's chief contribution was his form; hailing him as the father of the free verse movement, they placed their emphasis on his flexible sonority, his orchestral *timbre*, his tidal rhythms, his piling up of details into a symphonic structure. To the philosophers, he was the first of modern prophets; a rhapsodic mystic with a magnificently vulgar sense of democracy. To the psychologist, he was the most revealing of autobiographers; "whoever touches this book, touches a man," he wrote. To the lay reader, he was a protagonist of "the divine average"; celebrating himself—hearty, gross, noble, "sane and sensual to the core"—he celebrated humanity.

EMILY DICKINSON

Contemporary with Whitman, though, as far as the records show, utterly unaware of him, that strange phenomenon, Emily Dickinson, lived and wrote her emblematic poetry. Only four of the poems now famous were published during her lifetime; she cared nothing for a public, less for publicity. It was not until forty years after her death that she was recognized as one of the most original of American poets and, in some ways, the most remarkable woman poet since Sappho. Her centenary, occurring in the same year as Christina Rossetti's, was signaled by salvos of appreciation and the inevitable comparisons with the Englishwoman born five days earlier than her Amherst contemporary. Both poets were born in 1830; both were strongly influenced by their fathers. Both were, in spite of every difference, puritan "beyond the blood." Both made "the great abnegation"—one because she could not face marriage, one because the man she loved was married and she could face misery without him better than social tragedy with him. Here the personal similarities end. The poetic likenesses are more remote. True, both poets are linked by language, but even that tie cannot hold the two together long. They, themselves, would have been the first to repudiate the bond. Emily Dickinson would have been impatient with the round rhetoric of Christina Rossetti; much that the American wrote would have seemed reprehensible and, oftener than not, incomprehensible to the Englishwoman. As Christina grew older, her verse grew

thinner and more repetitive; moments of vision were expanded into ever-lengthening sententiousness. After Emily weathered the crisis, her verse grew continually tighter, her divinations condensed until the few lines became telegraphic and these telegrams seemed not only self-addressed but written in code. Not that Christina lacked divination; in the magnificent "From Hearth to Home," in several of the austere sonnets, and in some fifteen lyrics she attained sheer illumination. What is more difficult, she communicated it. At her infrequent highest, Christina Rossetti breathed a clearer, calmer air than "the nun of Amherst." Hers was a cloistral faith, secure above time and a troubling universe. Rumor to the contrary, there was nothing nun-like about Emily Dickinson. If the episodes of her childhood (*vide* the *Life and Letters*) were not sufficient to prove it, the poetry is; the freedom of her spirit manifests itself in the audacity of her images, the wild leap of her epithets, the candor which extends from irreverent mischief to divine challenge. Sometimes elliptical, sometimes so concentrated as to be cryptic, hers is a poetry of continual surprise where metaphors turned to epigrams, epigrams to compact dramas, a poetry where playfulness and passion merged and were sublimated in pure thought.

Could any one have failed to recognize this revelation at the outset? One supposes a few tense quatrains, a dozen syllables must have been sufficient to reveal the definiteness of her genius. But "the authorities" contained either slighting references or none at all. As late as 1914 *The New International Encyclopaedia* dismissed her life and work in ten lines, concluding "In thought her introspective lyrics are striking but are deficient in form." *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* seemed still less aware of her existence until 1926; as late as this the thirteenth edition contained only a mention, a cross-reference by way of comparison; her name did not even appear in the Index. Yet her *Poems* (*First Series*) had appeared as early as 1890 and two subsequent collections had been published before 1896. In these volumes—as well as in *The Single Hound* (1915) and *Further Poems*, an amazing set of newly discovered verses published in 1929—Emily Dickinson anticipated not only her avowed disciples but a score of poets unaware of her influence. Quaintly, without propaganda, she fashioned her imagist etchings fifty years before Imagism became a slo-

gan; her experiments in "slant" or "suspended" rhyme were far more radical than those of any exponent of assonance; her ungrammatical directness was more spontaneous than the painful dislocations of "the new primitives."

The evidence of this anticipating modernity is everywhere, especially in *Further Poems.* Emily would have been the last to claim anything, particularly the claim of being a forerunner, yet "Death's large democratic fingers" might well have prompted E. E. Cummings. MacLeish's "*Ars Poetica*" startles us by its abstraction:

> Poetry should not mean
> But be—

and Emily, sometime in the '70s, concludes:

> Beauty is not caused,
> It is.

Hodgson tells us "God loves an idle rainbow no less than laboring seas" and that "Reason has moons, but moons not hers lie mirrored on the sea, confounding her astronomers but, Oh, delighting me." And Emily (who knows how many years earlier?) was saying:

> The rainbow never tells me
> That gust and storm are by,
> Yet she is more convincing
> Than all philosophy.

Not that she despised philosophy. On the contrary, in the midst of her cakes and puddings and ice-creams, the family breadmaker (for Emily gloried in her housewifery) would turn to consider Bishop Berkeley. Intricately but with a final clarity, she expressed herself on the paradox of discipline:

> Experience is the angled road
> Preferred against the mind
> By paradox, the mind itself
> Presuming it to lead
> Quite opposite. How complicate
> The discipline of man,
> Compelling him to choose himself
> His pre-appointed plan.

Thus, and continuously, Emily would jot down the notes for her uncoördinated autobiography. When that difficult work

is synthesized, when some inspired arranger imposes an order on the eight hundred scattered poems,[1] the differing versions of many of the lines and the contradictions of her various editors will be resolved. As early as 1891, one of them (Mabel Loomis Todd) wrote: "To what further rigorous pruning her verses would have been subjected had she published them herself, we cannot know. They should be regarded in many cases as merely the first strong and suggestive sketches of an artist, intended to be embodied at some time in the finished picture." Her manner of writing made it equally hazardous for her editors, some of whom erred by too much editing, some by a too literal following of spacing, punctuation and obvious mistakes. "In most of her poems, particularly the later ones, everything by way of punctuation was discarded, except numerous dashes; and all important words began with capitals."

Thus Emily Dickinson became a puzzle. Much of her problem remains in the realm of the mysterious. She was like no other poet; her very "roughnesses" were individual. Time and again she skipped the expected rhyme, twisted the easy phrase, and put her indubitable mark on every line she wrote. Wholly underivative, her poetry was unique; her influence, negligible at first, is now incalculable.

THE AWAKENING OF THE WEST

By 1870 the public had been surfeited with sugared conceits and fine-spun delicacies. For almost twelve years, Whitman had stormed at the squeamish overrefinements of the period, but comparatively few had listened. Yet an instinctive distaste for the prevailing affectations had been growing, and when the West began to express itself in the raw accents of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, the people turned to them with enthusiasm and no little relief. Mark Twain, a frustrated prose Whitman, revealed the romantic Mississippi and the vast mid-West; Bret Harte, beginning a new American fiction in 1868, ushered in the wild humor and wilder poetry of California. It is still a question whether Bret Harte or John Hay first discovered the literary importance of Pike County narratives.

[1] Josephine Pollitt, in *Emily Dickinson: The Human Background* (1930), declares there is evidence that the number of poems she wrote is *double* that of the eight hundred published by her editors.

Twain was positive that Hay was the pioneer; documentary evidence points to Harte. But it is indisputable that Harte developed—and even overdeveloped—the possibilities of his backgrounds, whereas Hay, after a few brilliant ballads, reverted to his early poetic ideals and turned to the production of studied, polished and undistinguished verse. Lacking the tremendous gusto of Mark Twain or even the native accuracy of Hay, Bret Harte perfected a terse, dramatic idiom. Less exuberant than his compeers, he became more skillful in making his situations "effective"; he popularized dialect, sharpening his outlines and intensifying the power of his prose. Harte's was an influence that found its echo in the Hoosier stories of Edward Eggleston and made so vivid an impress on nineteenth-century literature.

To the loose swagger of the West, two other men added their diverse contributions. Edward Rowland Sill, cut short just as his work was gaining headway and strength, brought to it a gentle radicalism, a calm and cultured honesty; Joaquin Miller, rushing to the other extreme, theatricalized and exaggerated all he touched. He shouted platitudes at the top of his voice. His lines boomed with the pomposity of a brass band; floods, fires, hurricanes, extravagantly blazing sunsets, Amazonian women, the thunder of a herd of buffaloes—all were unmercifully piled up. And yet, even in its most blatant *fortissimos,* Miller's poetry occasionally captured the grandeur of his surroundings, the spread of the Sierras, the lavish energy of the Western world.

Now that the leadership of letters had passed from the East, all parts of the country began to try their voices. The West continued to hold its rugged supremacy; the tradition of Harte and Hay was followed (softened and sentimentalized) by Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley. In the South, Irwin Russell was pioneering in negro dialect (1875), Sidney Lanier fashioned his intricate harmonies (1879), and Madison Cawein began to create his tropical and overluxuriant lyrics. A few years later (in 1888) Russell brought out his faithfully rendered *Dialect Poems* and the first phase of the American renascence had passed.

REACTION AND REVOLT IN THE '90s

The reaction set in at the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century. The passionate urge had spent itself, and in its place there remained nothing but that minor form of art which concerns itself less with creation than with re-creation. These re-creators wrote verse that was precise, scholarly and patently reproductive of their literary loves. "In 1890," writes Percy H. Boynton, "the poetry-reading world was chiefly conscious of the passing of its leading singers for the last half-century. It was a period when they were recalling Emerson's 'Terminus' and Longfellow's 'Ultima Thule,' Whittier's 'A Lifetime,' Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar,' and Browning's 'Asolando.'" . . . The poetry of this period (whether it is the fine-chiseled verse of John B. Tabb or the ornate delicacy of Richard Watson Gilder) reflects a kind of moribund resignation; it is dead because it detached itself from the actual world, because it attempted to be a copied embellishment rather than an interpretation of life. But those who regarded poetry chiefly as a not too energetic indoor-exercise were not to rule unchallenged. Restlessness was in the air and revolt openly declared itself with the publication of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894), *More Songs from Vagabondia* (1896) and *Last Songs from Vagabondia* (1900). No one could have been more surprised at the tremendous popularity of these care-free celebrations (the first of the three collections went through seven rapid editions) than the young authors, Richard Hovey and Bliss Carman. For theirs was a revolt without a program, a headlong flight to escape—what? In the very first poem, Hovey voices their manifesto:

> Off with the fetters
> That chafe and restrain!
> Off with the chain!
> Here Art and Letters,
> Music and Wine
> And Myrtle and Wanda,
> The winsome witches,
> Blithely combine.
> Here is Golconda,
> Here are the Indies,
> Here we are free—
> Free as the wind is,
> Free as the sea,
> Free!

Free for what? one asks doggedly. Hovey does not answer directly, but with unflagging buoyancy, whipped up by scorn for the smug ones, he continues:

> I tell you that we,
> While you are smirking
> And lying and shirking
> Life's duty of duties,
> Honest sincerity,
> We are in verity
> Free!
> Free to rejoice
> In blisses and beauties!
> Free as the voice
> Of the wind as it passes!
> Free . . . *etc.*

Free, one concludes, to dwell with Music and Wine, Myrtle and Wanda, Art and Letters. Free, in short, to follow, with a more athletic energy, the same ideals as the parlor-poets they gibed so relentlessly. But the new insurgence triumphed. It was the heartiness, the gypsy jollity, the rush of high spirits that conquered. Readers of the *Vagabondia* books were swept along by their speed faster than by their philosophy.

The enthusiastic acceptance of these new apostles of outdoor vigor was, however, not as much of an accident as it seemed. On one side (the world of art) the public was wearied by barren meditations set to tinkling music; on the other (the world of action) it was faced by a staggering growth of materialism which it feared. Hovey, Carman and their imitators offered a swift way out. But it was neither an effectual nor a permanent escape. The war with Spain, the industrial turmoil, the growth of social consciousness and new ideas of responsibility made America look for fresh valuations. Hovey began to go deeper into himself and his age; in the mid-West, William Vaughn Moody grappled with the problems of his times only to have his work cut short by death in 1910. But these two were exceptions; in the main, it was another interval—two decades of appraisal and expectancy, of pause and preparation.

INTERIM—1890-1912

This interval of about twenty years was notable for its effort to treat the spirit of the times with a cheerful evasiveness,

a humorous unconcern; its most representative craftsmen were, with four exceptions, the writers of light verse. These four exceptions were Richard Hovey, Bliss Carman, William Vaughn Moody and Edwin Markham.

Moody's power was the greatest, although it never reached its potentialities. In "An Ode in Time of Hesitation," he protested against turning the "new-world victories into gain" and painted American idealism on an idealistic canvas. In "The Quarry" he celebrated America's part in preventing the breaking-up of China by the empires of Europe (an act accomplished by John Hay, poet and diplomat). In "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," a dirge wrenched from the depths of his nature, Moody cried out against our own imperialists. It was the fulfillment of this earlier poem which found its climax in the lengthy Ode, with such lines as:

> Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
> This crown shall crown their struggle and their ruth?
> Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
> Mewing its mighty youth? . . .
> . . . O ye who lead
> Take heed!
> Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite.

Early in 1899, the name of Edwin Markham flashed across the land when, out of San Francisco, rose the challenge of "The Man with the Hoe." This poem, which was once ecstatically called "the battle-cry of the next thousand years" (Joaquin Miller declared it contained "the whole Yosemite—the thunder, the might, the majesty"), caught up the passion for social justice that was waiting to be intensified in poetry. Markham summed up and spiritualized the unrest that was in the air; in the figure of one man with a hoe, he drew a picture of men in the mines, men in the sweatshop, men working without joy, without hope. To social consciousness he added social conscience. In a ringing if rhetorical blank verse, Markham crystallized the expression of outrage, the heated ferment of the period.

Inspiring as these examples were, they did not generate others of their kind; the field lay fallow for more than a decade. The lull was pronounced, the gathering storm remained inaudible.

RENASCENCE—1913

Suddenly the "new" poetry burst upon us with unexpected vigor and extraordinary variety. Moody and Markham were its immediate forerunners; Whitman its spiritual godfather. October, 1912, saw the first issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, a monthly that was to introduce the work of hitherto unknown poets, schools and "movements." The magazine came at the very moment before the breaking of the storm. Flashes and rumblings had already been troubling the literary heavens; a few months later came—the deluge! For three years the skies continued to discharge such strange and divergent phenomena as Vachel Lindsay's *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* (1913), James Oppenheim's *Songs for the New Age* (1914), the first anthology of *The Imagists* (1914), *Challenge* (1914), Amy Lowell's *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), Lindsay's *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), Robert Frost's *North of Boston* (1914), Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), John Gould Fletcher's *Irradiations* (1915), Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems* (1916). By 1917, the "new" poetry was ranked as "America's first national art"; its success was sweeping, its sales unprecedented. People who never before had read verse, turned to it and found they could not only read but relish it. They discovered that for the enjoyment of poetry it was no longer necessary to have at their elbows a dictionary of rare words and classical references; they were not required to be acquainted with Latin legendry and the minor love-affairs of the lesser Greek divinities. Life was their glossary, not literature. The new work spoke to them in their own language. And it did more: it spoke to them of what they rarely had heard expressed; it was not only closer to their soil but nearer to their souls.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

One reason why the new poetry achieved so sudden a success was its freedom from the traditionally stilted "poetic diction." Revolting strongly against the assumption that poetry must have a vocabulary of its own, the poets of the new era spoke in the oldest and most stirring tongue; they used a language that was the language not of the poetasters but of the people.

In the tones of ordinary speech they rediscovered the strength, the dignity, the vital core of the commonplace.

Edwin Arlington Robinson had already been employing the sharp epithet, the direct and clarifying utterance which was to become part of our present technique. As early as 1897, in *The Children of the Night*, Robinson anticipated the brief characterizations and etched outlines of Masters' *Spoon River Anthology;* he stressed the psychological element with unerring artistry and sureness of touch. His sympathetic studies of men whose lives were, from a worldly standpoint, failures were a sharp reaction to the current high valuation on financial achievements, ruthless efficiency and success at any cost. Ahead of his period, he had to wait until 1916, when a public prepared for him by the awakened interest in native poetry discovered *The Man Against the Sky* (1916) and the richness of Robinson at the same time. After that, his audience increased steadily. His Arthurian legends replaced Tennyson's, *Tristram* (1927) attaining a greater sale than most successful novels. *Cavender's House* (1929), although a difficult and lengthy monologue, solidified his position; the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry was thrice awarded to him; and there was no longer any doubt as to the importance of his contribution to American literature.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Frost and Masters were the bright particular planets of 1915, although the star of the latter waned while the light of the former grew in magnitude. Yet Masters' most famous book will rank as a landmark. In it, he synthesized the small towns of the mid-West with a background unmistakably local and with implications that are universal. This amazing volume, in its curiosity and comprehensiveness, laid open a broad cross-section of whole communities. Beneath its surface tales and dramas, its condensation of grocery-store gossip, *Spoon River Anthology* was a great part of America in microcosm.

The success of the volume was sensational. It was actually one of the season's "best sellers"; in a few months, it went into edition after edition. Perhaps most readers passed over the larger issues (Masters' revelation of the sordid cheats and hypocrisies, his arraignment of dirty politics and dirtier chicanery) intent on seeing their neighbors pitilessly exposed. Yet

had Masters dwelt only on the drab disillusion of the village, had he (as he was constantly in danger of doing) overemphasized the morbid and sensual episodes, he would have left only a spectacular and poorly balanced work. But the book ascends to a definite exaltation and ends on a plane of half-victorious idealism. Indigenous to its roots, it is stark, unflinching, unforgettable.

ROBERT FROST

The same year that brought forth *Spoon River Anthology* saw the American edition of Frost's *North of Boston.* It was evident at once that the true poet of New England had arrived. Unlike his predecessors, Frost was never a poetic provincial—never parochial in the sense of America still being a literary parish of England. Frost was as native as the lonely farmhouses, the dusty blueberries, the isolated people, the dried-up brooks and mountain intervals that he described. Loving, above everything else, the beauty of the Fact, he shared, with Robinson and Masters, the determination to tell not merely the actual but the factual truth. But Frost, a less disillusioned though a more saddened poet, wore his rue and his realism with a difference. Where Robinson was definite, Frost diverged, going roundabout and, in his speculative wandering, covering a wider territory of thought. Where Masters was violent and hotly scornful, Frost was reticent and quietly sympathetic. Again where Masters, viewing the mêlée above the struggle, wrote *about* his characters, Frost was *of* his people. Where Robinson, in his more racy and reminiscent moods, often reflected New England, Frost *was* New England.

North of Boston was well described by the poet's own subtitle: "a book of people." In it one not only sees a countryside of people living out the intricate pattern of their lives, one catches them thinking out loud, one can hear the very tones of their voices. Here we have speech so arranged and translated that the speaker is heard on the printed page; any reader will be led by the kind and color of these words into reproducing the changing accents in which they are supposed to be uttered. It is this insistence that "all poetry is the reproduction of the tones of actual speech" which gives these poems, as well as the later lyrics, a quickly communicated emotional

appeal. It endows them with the deepest power of which words are capable—the power to transmit significant sounds. These sounds, let in from the vernacular, are full of a robust, creative energy; they are compacted of the blood and bones of the people they speak for.

But Frost was by no means the dark naturalist that many suspected. Behind the mask of "grimness" which many critics fastened upon him, there is a continual elfin pucker; a whimsical smile, a half-disclosed raillery glints beneath his most somber monologues. The later *New Hampshire* (1923) and *West-Running Brook* (1928) proved his "other side"; Frost's lyrics are no less personal for being philosophical. Now it is obvious how Vergilian a spirit animated a passionate Puritan; Frost's concrete facts are symbols of spiritual values. Through his very reticence as well as through his revelations one hears much more than the voice of New England.

CARL SANDBURG

Just so, the great mid-West, that vast region of steel mills and slaughter-houses, of cornfields and prairies, of crowded cities and empty skies, spoke through Carl Sandburg. In Sandburg, industrial America found its voice: *Chicago Poems* (1916), *Cornhuskers* (1918), *Smoke and Steel* (1920) vibrate with the immense purring of dynamos, the rhythms of threshing arms, the gossip and laughter of construction gangs, the gigantic and tireless energy of the machine. Frankly indebted to Whitman, Sandburg's poems were less sweeping but more varied; musically his lines marked a great advance. He sounded the extremes of the gamut; there are few poems in our language more violent than "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," few lyrics as hushed and tender as "Cool Tombs."

Like Frost, Sandburg was true to *things*. But Frost was content with the inexhaustible fact and its spiritual implications; he never hoped to drain it all. Sandburg also fed on the fact, but it did not satisfy him. He had strange hungers; he hunted eagerly for the question behind, the answer beyond. The actual scene, to him, was a point of vivid and abrupt departure. Reality, far from being the earth on which he dwelt, was, for Sandburg, the ground he touched before rising; realism acted merely as a springboard from which this poet dove into a

romantic mysticism. His later work, in fact, was almost too full of gnomic gestures.

When *Chicago Poems* first appeared, it was received with a disfavor ranging from hesitant patronization to the scornful jeers of the academicians. Sandburg was accused of verbal anarchy; of a failure to distinguish prose matter from poetic material; of uncouthness, vulgarity, assaults on the English language and a score of other crimes. In the face of those who even in *Good Morning, America* (1928) still see only a coarseness and distorted veritism in Sandburg, it cannot be said too often that he is brutal only when dealing with brutal things; that his "vulgarity" springs from love of life as a whole, not from affection for a drab or decorative part of it; that his bitterest invectives are the result of a disgust of shams. The strength of his hatred is exceeded by the challenge of his love.

THE IMAGISTS AND AMY LOWELL

Sandburg established himself as the most daring user of American words—rude words ranging from the racy metaphors of the soil to the slang of the street. But long before this, the possibilities of a new vocabulary were being tested. As early as 1865, Whitman was saying, "We must have new words, new potentialities of speech—an American range of self-expression. . . . The new times, the new people need a tongue according, yes, and what is more, they will have such a tongue—will not be satisfied until it is evolved."

It is curious to think that one of the most effective agents to fulfill Whitman's prophecy and free modern poetry from a self-imposed diction was that little band of preoccupied specialists, the Imagists. They were, for all their preciosity and occasional extravagances, liberators in the sense that their programs, pronouncements and propaganda compelled their most dogged adversaries to acknowledge the integrity of their aims. Their restatement of old truths was one of the things which helped the new poetry out of a bog of rhetorical rubbish.

Ezra Pound was the first to gather the insurgents into a definite group. During the winter of 1913, he collected a number of poems illustrating the Imagist point of view, conceiving Imagism as a discriminating term like "lyricism," and had them printed in a volume: *Des Imagistes* (1914). A little

later Pound withdrew from the clan. The rather queerly assorted group began to disintegrate and Amy Lowell, then in England, brought some of the younger members together in three yearly anthologies (*Some Imagist Poets*) which appeared in 1915, 1916 and 1917. There were, in Miss Lowell's new grouping, three Englishmen (D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, F. S. Flint), three Americans (H. D., John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell), and their creed, summed up in six statements,[1] was as follows:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms—as the expression of new moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. . . . We do believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.
4. To present an image (hence the name: "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.

It does not seem possible that these six obvious and almost platitudinous principles (which, incidentally, the Imagists often neglected in their poetry) could have evoked the storm of argument, fury and downright vilification that broke as soon as the militant Miss Lowell began to champion them. Far from being revolutionary, these principles were not new; they were not even thought so by their sponsors. The Imagists themselves realized that they were restating ideals which had fallen into desuetude, and declared, "They are the essentials of all great poetry, indeed of all great literature." And yet many conservative critics, joined by the one hundred per cent reactionaries, rushed wildly to combat these "heresies"! They forgot that, in trying to protect the future from such lawlessness as "using the exact word," from "freedom in the choice of subject," from the importance of "concentration," they were

[1] The injunction to "use no word which does not contribute to the presentation"—a Spartan injunction originating with Pound—seems to have been forgotten by Miss Lowell's "Amygists."

actually attacking the highest traditions of their enshrined past.

The fracas succeeded in doing more good than the work of the Imagists themselves. H. D. removed herself from controversies and took up her residence in Switzerland, perfecting her delicate and exquisitely finished designs. John Gould Fletcher, a more vacillating expatriate, remained in London and continued to strengthen his gift though shifting his standards; his later and richer work was in complete opposition to the early pronouncements. Miss Lowell was left to carry on the battle single-handed; to defend the theories which, in practice, she was beginning to violate brilliantly. A most energetic and unflagging experimenter, the late Miss Lowell was amazing in her versatility. She wielded a controversial cudgel with one hand and, with the other, wrote Chaucerian stanzas, polyphonic prose, monologs in New England dialect, irregular *vers libre*, conservative couplets, myths from the Peruvian, translations from the French, echoes from the Japanese, re-creations of Indian folk-lore!

The work of the Imagists was done. Its members began to develop themselves by themselves. They had helped to swell the tide of realistic and romantic naturalism—a tide of which their contribution was merely one wave, a breaker that carried its impact far inshore.

THE FREE VERSE FURORE

One of the tenets of the Imagists (the belief that the individuality of a poet may often be expressed better in free verse than in conventional forms) spread further than all the other articles of their faith. The ease of its fulfillment more than its apparent truth led hundreds who were not, in any sense, Imagist poets to adopt *vers libre* as their medium. The result was an inundation of footless—and often headless—writing; the little which was incisive and original was lost in heavy floods of merely loquacious "shredded prose." For fully six years there was produced an incalculable quantity of tiresome exhibitionism. Most of this verse was frankly bad. But so, the defenders of *vers libre* objected, are most sonnets. The fact, however, remains that the original exponents of free verse began to look with distrust on the dubious accomplishments of their camp-followers. H. D.'s chiseled lines, Amy Lowell's

enameled pictures, Edgar Lee Masters' brusque epitaphs remain unusual examples of their genre. Other writers gave this amorphous medium a certain definiteness: John Gould Fletcher based his symphonic effects on free sweep and cadence instead of meter; Maxwell Bodenheim forced unions of unhappy nouns and pitiless adjectives without benefit of rhyme; Alfred Kreymborg perfected a type of staccato whimsy in which no particular beat was perceptible. But the poets themselves, partly because of the wish to change, partly to show that they were not bound by a theory, began to turn back to orthodox patterns.

Amy Lowell's last work was largely in formal verse; her later rhymes and ballads relied greatly on the steady pace of iambics. Bodenheim and Fletcher employed more symmetrical structures; Masters returned to the blank verse of his youth. H. D., who was the one perfect Imagist, the surest artisan in unrhymed cadence, achieved delicate effects in interwoven rhyme. And Kreymborg, who surpassed them all in metrical eccentricities, whose lines were so brittle and elusive that melodic comments (performed by the poet on his mandolute) were required to fill out the elisions, finally turned to the creation of straightforward sonnets and simple couplets.

To what can we attribute the return of the prodigal *vers libertine?* To a reversion to orthodox type? Or a revulsion from mere novelty of expression? It seems more likely that, having passed through various phases of experimentation, these poets, like all other workers, desired to crystallize their idiom in some lasting shape. The chief fault with free verse was that it yielded too easily, and what the creator enjoys is the feel of a firm medium, a half-forbidding, half-pliant form. No real artist has failed to want—and work with—"the resisting mass."

FOLK-RHYTHMS AND THE NEGRO

In a country that has not been mellowed by antiquity, that has not possessed songs for its peasantry or traditions for its singers, one cannot look for a wealth of folk-stuff. In such a country—the United States, to be specific—what folk-poetry there is has followed the path of the pioneer. At first these homely songs were mere adaptations and localized versions of English ballads and border minstrelsy, of which Cecil Sharp's

Folk Songs of the Appalachian Highlands and the *Lonesome Tunes* recovered in the Kentucky mountains by Howard Brockway and Loraine Wyman are excellent examples. But a more definitely native spirit found expression in various sections of these States. In the West (during the Seventies) Bret Harte and John Hay celebrated, in their own accents, the rough miners, ranchers, steamboat pilots, the supposed descendants of the emigrants from Pike County, Missouri. In the Middle West the desire for local color and music led to the popularity of James Whitcomb Riley's Hoosier ballads and the spirited jingles of Eugene Field. In the South the inspiration of the negro spirituals and ante bellum songs was utilized to excellent effect by Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris and, later, by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

The Indian, a more ancient primitive, has remained as difficult to adopt poetically as he has been to assimilate ethnically. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the white and red races are worlds apart in sentiment, philosophy, and attitude to life, many gallant attempts were made to bring the spirit of the Indian into our literature. The late Natalie Curtis Burlin did excellent pioneering work in *The Indians' Book;* Mary Austin, in spite of a far-fetched theory and dubious conclusions, made an extended study of the matter in *The American Rhythm;* and *The Path on the Rainbow*, edited by George W. Cronyn in 1918, proved to be the best collection on the subject available to the public. Among the individual workers in the field, other than those mentioned, praise was given to Constance Lindsay Skinner, Alice Corbin Henderson, Witter Bynner and Lew Sarett. Of these, Sarett was most successful in capturing the fluid combination of dance, tune, ejaculation, and occasional vivid phrase which constitute the poetry of the North American Indian.

Since the days of Dunbar, the Negro had made great strides in self-expression. American music—"classical" as well as popular—benefited from the strong insistence of African drums and the syncopated shuffling of the feet of slaves. Jazz itself became glorified; the intelligentsia claimed it as their own! In sociology the Negro, through men like W. E. Burghardt DuBois, Benjamin Brawley, Walter White, turned to be his own analyst. In poetry the results were mixed and uneven. But it became apparent that the Negro was beginning

to free himself, not only from a sentimentality designed to please the whites, but from an attitude which was not so much race-conscious as self-conscious. He established his identity at the same time as his poetic integrity.

Beginning in about 1922, the Negro, so long despised as a creator, became a literary fashion. Several volumes of the stirring Spirituals were followed by collections of his secular songs, "blues," "mellows," work-ballads, etc. His ante bellum chants swept over post-war America and Europe; his primitive rhythms affected the most sophisticated of modern composers. James Weldon Johnson's pioneer anthology, *American Negro Poetry* (1922), was followed by Countée Cullen's *Caroling Dusk* (1927) and C. V. Calverton's *An Anthology of American Negro Literature* (1929). Appraisal set in almost simultaneously; a dozen tomes bristling with energy and research appeared, one of them (*American Negro Folk-Songs* by Newman I. White) containing over eight hundred songs divided into thirteen groups. These imposingly annotated collections, added to the more original work, made interest assume the proportions of a Revival. The Negro himself became suddenly articulate; his novels, essays, poems—many of them of unsuspected high caliber—were published everywhere. James Weldon Johnson, after a long career as propagandist, leapt into prominence with *God's Trombones,* seven negro sermons in verse; Claude McKay expressed a stern if over-violent spirit in verse and prose; Countée Cullen, Langston Hughes and Jean Toomer ranged from dulcet lyrics to hot "blues" and savage protests. For a while the Negro gained and suffered from being a craze. Then the cult passed; the genuine creations remained.

Meanwhile, scholars all over America were ransacking every backwood and byway. South Carolina ballads, songs of Maine lumberjacks, ballads of men who worked in the woods of Wisconsin, songs of the "shanty-boy" of Michigan and Minnesota, original and derived folk-tunes of the South, cowboy songs from the West—into every State the recorders went, hot on the trail of the vanishing folk-idiom. The poets were not far behind. The tradition of Harte and Hay was carried on by such interpreters as Harry Herbert Knibbs, Badger Clark and Edwin Ford Piper. The Kentucky Mountain region was interpreted by Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Roy Helton. The

"white South" found expression through John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson, Merrill Moore and DuBose Heyward. A group of Oregon poets—Oluf Olsen, H. L. Davis, H. M. Corning—emerged in the late 1920s. But, of all who approximated the spirit of folk-poetry, none made more striking or more indubitably American contributions than Vachel Lindsay of Springfield, Illinois.

LINDSAY AND OPPENHEIM

Lindsay was essentially a people's poet. He did not hesitate to express himself in terms of the lowest common denominator; his fingers seemed alternately on his pen and the public pulse. Living near enough to the South to appreciate the Negroes' qualities without wishing to theatricalize them, Lindsay was tremendously influenced by the colorful suggestions, the fantastic superstitions, the revivalistic gusto, the half-savage Christianity and, above all, by the curiously syncopated music that once characterized the black man in America. In "The Congo," "John Brown" and the less extended "Simon Legree," the words roll with the solemnity of an exhortation, dance with a grotesque fervor, or snap, crackle, and leap with all the humorous rhythms of a piece of "ragtime." Lindsay caught the burly color and boisterous music of camp-meetings, minstrel shows, revival jubilees. He was an itinerant evangelist preaching the Gospel through a saxophone.

And Lindsay did more. He carried his democratic determinations further than any of his *confrères*. Dreaming of a great communal Art, he insisted that all villages should be centers of beauty, all citizens, artists. At heart a missionary even more than a minstrel, Lindsay often lost himself in his own doctrines. Worse, he frequently cheapened himself and caricatured his own gift by pandering to the vaudeville instinct, putting a noisy "punch" into everything, regardless of taste, artistry or a sense of proportion. He was most impressive when purely fantastic (as in "The Ghosts of the Buffaloes," the shorter fancies, the series of metaphorical poems about the moon) or when a greater theme and a finer restraint unite (as in "The Eagle That Is Forgotten") to create a preaching that does not cease to be poetry.

Something of the same blend of prophet and poet was found

in the work of James Oppenheim. Oppenheim, a throwback to the ancient Hebrew singers, rolled the music of the Psalms through his lines; his poetry, with its obvious reminders of Whitman, was biblical in its inflection, Oriental in its heat. It carried to the Western world the color of the East, adding the gift of prophecy to pragmatic purpose. In books like *War and Laughter* and *Songs for the New Age* the race of god-breakers and god-makers spoke with a new voice; here, with analytic intensity, the old iconoclasm and still older worship were united.

WAR AND POST-WAR

The World War, in spite of the "glory-boys," was anything but an apotheosis; being scarcely more glamorous than monotonous murder, it could not be glorified. Abetted by those who, far from the firing-line, fought recklessly in print, it brought forth vast quantities of verse but practically no poetry. America produced no recorder to rank with Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, C. H. Sorley, Edmund Blunden, or Wilfred Owen. The Western front "made" Alan Seeger and Joyce Kilmer, but death on the battlefield was responsible for their reputation, and both names persist, each by virtue of a single poem, one of which (wholly unrelated to war) has become "The Rosary" of American letters. Our reaction to life in the trenches was far greater than our participation in it. Suffering less from shell-shock than post-war disillusion, many of the younger writers indulged themselves in prolonged literary nerves. T. S. Eliot (mistakenly) became their prophet, detachment and despair their contradictory gods. Eliot, previously, had projected the wastes of futility, accentuating them by juxtaposing tragedy and triviality. The early "Prufrock" and "Sweeney" series accomplished the effect in an acrid light verse; Eliot's later ironies emphasized, with new bitterness, the hollowness of a life without purpose and without faith. Far from celebrating the feeble, Eliot satirized the futilitarians:

> We are the hollow men
> We are the stuffed men
> Leaning together
> Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
> Our dried voices, when
> We whisper together

Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without color,
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes to death's other Kingdom
Remember us—if at all—not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

But most of those so strongly influenced by Eliot—and by Eliot's influences—captured nothing except his (and Jules Laforgue's) idiom. His abrupt allusiveness, his style at once coarse and subtle, his emotional acuteness, could be imitated but not captured; his unacknowledged disciples merely parodied the trick of disassociation, the erudition without Eliot's wisdom, the gesture without (if I may misquote) emotion. The results were inevitable; sterile intellectualism at one extreme, infantile barbarism at the other.

The common reader, confronted by the extremely "modernist," poet, was unsure whether to claim his rights as reader, or turn altogether from what seemed a communication that communicated nothing more intelligible than the author's wish to be let alone. Robert Graves and Laura Riding in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* summarized the situation: "The bond between the Victorian poet and his reader was at least an agreement between them of a common, though not an original, sentiment. The meaning of a poem was understood between them beforehand from the very title, and the persuasion of the word-music was intended to keep the poem vibrating in the memory long after it had been read. . . . The modernist poet does not have to issue a program declaring his intentions toward the reader or to issue an announcement of tactics. . . . The important part of poetry is now not the personality of the poet as embodied in a poem, but the personality of the poem itself; that is, its quality of independence from both the reader and the poet, once the poet has separated it from his personality by making it complete—a new and self-explanatory creature."

Sometimes these "self-explanatory creatures" explained; sometimes they did not. Often they exhibited nothing more specific than self-conscious snobbery. But the best of them, oppressed by the dead hand of the past, were effective in their revolt; they destroyed that semi-comatose condition which so often attends the reading of poetry and (being a criticism of bad poetry as well as of the reader) revealed new wit, new vitality, new signals of beauty beneath the surface oddities. Thus E. E. Cummings, a lyrical poet in spite of his program, wrote: "To create is first of all to destroy. . . . There is and can be no such thing as authentic art until the *bons trucs* (whereby we are taught to see and imitate on canvas and in stone and by words this so-called world) are entirely and thoroughly and perfectly annihilated by that vast and painful process of unthinking which may result in a minute bit of purely personal feeling. Which minute bit is art."

Thus we had the phenomenon of Gertrude Stein "destroying" the English language, attempting to create a speech in which words had only abstract values, and James Joyce, in his later work, breaking up and reconstructing syllables until they resembled a colorful game of anagrams. Between a literature of obscure scholasticism and experiments in "the vast and painful process of unthinking," the younger writers evolved a phase if not a philosophy of their own. Malcolm Cowley, expressing this for them, summarized it: "We ourselves have found that most of our philosophical difficulties can be solved not by philosophy itself, but by living on, by changing one's angle of approach, and often simply by changing one's place. The war, which carried many of our generation into strange countries, had a partly intellectual, partly emotional effect that is generally disregarded. It destroyed our sense of dull security and taught us to live from day to day. It gave us a thirst for action and adventure. It presented us with violent contrasts, with very simple tragedies, and so led us back toward the old themes of love and death."

Lines divided, ran parallel; groups coalesced, split apart; many tendencies were in the air at one time. The difficult and re-creative "process of unthinking" often degenerated into mere thoughtlessness, a tendency glorified by the "Surrealists" and the editors of *transition*. Opposed to this, the

classicism of Eliot pointed in a contrary direction. Joined to a cool scholasticism, a new orderliness came to offset the loose writing and looser thinking of the free verse plethora. The most distinguished of these groups was "The Fugitives," centering (not inappropriately) about a university, in Nashville, Tennessee. Its members—especially John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, Merrill Moore, Robert Penn Warren—were experimenters, but they realized that experimentation in itself was not of fundamental importance. Founded on a definite esthetic, intellectual rather than emotional, their work achieved a shapeliness in which thought restrained sentiment, in which conception and perception were skillfully balanced. A new semi-cavalier grace became apparent. Wallace Stevens, a few years previously, had perfected an orchidaceous flowering of words from words; his abstract elegance was shared by Hart Crane who, however, extended it to include subjects not only mechanistic and local but national. Rhetoric and plain speech flourished side by side. The euphuistic distortions of Maxwell Bodenheim, the overluxuriant figures of E. E. Cummings, grew in the same lustrum as the austere, later lyrics of Sara Teasdale and the emotional directness of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

THE NEW LYRICISTS

During the pendulum play of convention and revolt, the lyric note fluctuated little. Conrad Aiken developed a music which, if crepuscular, was harmonically subtle and gravely sensitive. Archibald MacLeish, turning his indebtedness to Aiken and Eliot to good account, employed suspension and dissonance to achieve effects that reached far beyond their technique. Stephen Vincent Benét and William Rose Benét, brothers in blood and balladry, plundered modernity and antiquity for their fancies; the former taking the Civil War for a background in *John Brown's Body*, constructed a many-voiced lyric of epic proportions. John Hall Wheelock luxuriated in leaping if somewhat loudly determined affirmations. George Dillon, a singer in water-color, composed delicately patterned interrogations. The short lyrics of Robert Frost grew in strength and suggestiveness.

The work of the women ranged from the outspoken to the

involved. Two distinct influences governed most of them: Emily Dickinson and Lizette Woodworth Reese. The epigrammatic condensations of the former, unknown in her lifetime, affected an entire generation with increasing force. The firm speech and sparse imagery of the latter won many away from the lush and cloying love-songs of the type enshrined in 1842 by Rufus W. Griswold in his waxwork *Gems from American Female Poets*. Edna St. Vincent Millay, in the later sonnets no less than in the early "Renascence," deepened an already impassioned note, increasing the admiration as well as the size of her audience. Sara Teasdale intensified a simple but flexible melodic line. Genevieve Taggard and Jean Starr Untermeyer lifted the ordinary round of woman's everyday into the extraordinary and, not seldom, into the ecstatic.

Others, refining their poetry of a too thickly human passion, turned to an elliptical metaphysics. The "mechanism of sensibility" brought them back to Crashaw, Vaughan, Webster, Ford and Donne. One caught the overtones of the late Elizabethans in the accents of Louise Bogan, Léonie Adams, Hazel Hall, Elinor Wylie, among others. Elinor Wylie acknowledged the relationship implicitly, the title of her first volume (*Nets to Catch the Wind*) being taken from a poem by Webster, the title of her last (*Angels and Earthly Creatures*) from a sermon by Donne. But these poets did not depend too much on intellectual virtuosity and involuted images; their sensibility was their own. Less prodigal (and, it may be added, less passionate) than Donne and his followers, they reflected something of his order and his fiercely conceived beauty through temperaments essentially modern and feminine. Elinor Wylie, never "confusing the spiritual and the sensual either through false fear or false reverence," began with verbal brilliance and ended by celebrating the radiance of spirit and "the pure and valiant mind." Léonie Adams, a more withdrawn metaphysician, yielded her secret only to those who were already poets, though even the unlettered could sense the music and authority of her verse. Louise Bogan, pursued by the mutability of time, and Hazel Hall, haunted by the finality of death, outlined a poetry that was both sensuous and cerebral.

RANGE AND DIFFERENCE

The poets of the period answered the demands put upon them by a rapidly changing civilization. They reflected the paradoxical energy of the age and its sterility, its contradictory appetite for realism and fantasy, its skepticism and the faith submerged beneath doubtful searching. They won their audience by their very differences. They sounded a range hitherto barely suggested in America, creating a poetry panoramic instead of parochial. Differing widely from most of their English fellow-craftsmen, they were far less hampered by the burdens of tradition or the necessity of casting them off. The temper of the times was for catholicity, for variety of thought and gesture. All forms were used, new ones invented. Both in the conventional and in the experimental modes, America became a literary melting-pot. The very variety of subject matter was in striking opposition to the thin, limited products of the transition poet. Geographically, the range was no less wide. New England ceased to be the one literary center; there was scarcely a village which could not boast a local laureate. As the country matured, the poets grew with it, springing up in most unlikely places, ready to celebrate urban miracles of stone and steel as well as gaunt prairie silences.

Evaluations and reappraisals followed. Poets turned critics, critics returned to poetry. The period was shrewdly analyzed by Conrad Aiken, Amy Lowell, Edmund Wilson, Allen Tate, Malcolm Cowley and by Yvor Winters, whose practice fell short of his excellent theories.

It was as if submerged springs had suddenly burst through arid soil; instead of one placid stream, there were a dozen rushing currents, a score of unsuspected freshets.

THE NEW SPIRIT

It is a happy circumstance that this volume should begin with Emily Dickinson. For here was a forerunner of the new spirit—free in expression, unhampered in choice of subject, penetrative in psychology—to which a countryful of writers responded.

Most of the poets represented in these pages found vigorous

material in a world of honest and often harsh reality. They learned to distinguish beauty from prettiness; to wring loveliness out of squalor; to search for truth even in the dark caves of the unconscious.

And with the use of the material of everyday life, there came a further simplification: the use of the language of everyday speech. The stilted and mouth-filling phrases were practically discarded in favor of the daily vocabulary. It would be hard to find a representative poet employing such awkward and outworn contractions as *'twixt, 'mongst, ope'*; such evidences of poor padding as *adown, did go, doth smile;* such dull rubber-stamps (*clichés* is the French term) as *heavenly blue, roseate glow, golden hope, girlish grace, gentle breeze,* etc. The *peradventures, forsooths* and *mayhaps* have disappeared (one hopes) forever.

As the speech of the modern poet grew less elaborate, so did the patterns embodying it. Not necessarily discarding rhyme, regular rhythm or any of the musical assets of the older poets, forms grew simpler; the intricate versification gave way to lines that reflect and suggest the tones of animated and even exalted speech.

One could go into minute particulars concerning the growth of an American spirit in our literature and point out how many of the poets responded to forces larger than their backgrounds. Such a course would be endless and unprofitable. It is pertinent, however, to observe that, young as this nation is, it is already being supplied with the stuff of legends, ballads and even epics. Most of the modern singers turned to their own locale for indigenous material. They turned impartially to mountain songs, city stories, semi-mythical figures like John Brown and Paul Bunyan, transformed heroes (*vide* the growth of a legendary Lincoln apart from the actual one), to the intricate relation of men and machines. Believing not only in the uncertainties of struggle but in the certainty of some sort of goal, they achieved, through search and experiment, that order out of chaos which is poetry.

In conclusion it must be repeated that, though this collection claims to be panoramic it is also critical. Detailed study of every corner of the field is, therefore, impossible; the period being particularly rich in these so articulate States, many omissions were imperative. In extenuation the editor, main-

taining that art itself is only a record of temperament and taste, pleads—as all editors must—*chacun à son gout*. He realizes that any gathering, no matter how voluminous, cannot be a summary but only an introduction to an epoch. The purpose of an anthology, he concludes dogmatically, is to stimulate interest rather than to satisfy curiosity. It is the provoking as well as the sharing of enjoyment, which, at the heart of the poet, is the very purpose of poetry.

L. U.

EMILY DICKINSON

Emily (Norcross) Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, December 10, 1830. With the exception of a sudden crisis in her early twenties, her life was bare of outward adventure. Her childhood had the ordinary uneventful events common to other children in Amherst which at that time was so remote that, only a few years before, her mother's dower had been brought to the town by brindle oxen. Her father, Edward Dickinson, a lawyer and "pillar of the church," was her adoration as well as her greatest influence; her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, in her valuable *Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson,* quotes Emily as saying, "If father is asleep on the sofa the house is full." At sixteen she formed the closest friendship with a girl who visited Amherst, who later married her brother Austin, and (as "Sister Sue") was the only one to share her secrets and her manuscripts. At seventeen Emily entered South Hadley Female Seminary, disliked it intensely, grew homesick, rebelled at the extremities of its Puritanism and, on one occasion, packed her bags and took the stage home. From eighteen to twenty-three she was, according to her biographer, "a social creature in the highest sense."

When she was twenty-three, she spent a winter in Washington with her father who was in Congress for two terms. In the spring of 1854 Emily visited Philadelphia and there encountered that which was to influence her life—and her poetry—so profoundly. The details are still largely a matter of surmise. As late as 1924 Madame Bianchi (Sue's daughter) wrote, "Even now, after the many slow years she has been removed from us in the body, her spirit hinders the baring of that chapter which has been so universally misunderstood." It is, however, an open secret that Emily fell suddenly and completely in love with a man already married, made "the great renunciation" (partly because of the strict pattern in which she had been reared, partly because she could not bring unhappiness to another woman) and rushed desperately home. From that time she went on alone, clinging always closer to her father's house. Her life became as confined as a nun's; she withdrew from any public appearance; for thirty years she scarcely set foot beyond her own doorstep.

During her lifetime four of her poems were published—through no desire of her own. She never thought of publication, never cared to capitalize her emotions; even more deeply than Heine

she could have cried, "*Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen mach ich die kleinen Lieder*"—and these brief, almost telegraphic revelations have outlasted the more pretentious writing of a century. In 1890, four years after her death, the first volume of her posthumous poetry appeared with an introduction by Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

"She habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends," writes Higginson, "and it was with great difficulty that she was persuaded to print, during her lifetime, three or four poems." Yet she wrote over eight hundred of these direct and spontaneous illuminations, sending many of them in letters to friends, or (written on chance slips of paper and delivered without further comment) to her sister Sue. Slowly the peculiar Blake-like quality of her thought won a small circle of readers; *Poems* (1890) was followed by *Poems—Second Series* (1892) and *Poems—Third Series* (1896), the contents being collected and edited by her two friends, Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd. Several years later, a further generous volume was assembled by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, entitled *The Single Hound* (1914).

Although most of the poems were published in the Nineties and although the recent revival of interest in poetry drew attention to the peculiar individuality of Emily Dickinson's expression, her readers remained few. An occasional article appeared, showing her "lack of control" or, beneath a cover of condescension, ridiculing her "hit-or-miss grammar, sterile rhythms, and appalling rhymes." A devotee here and there defended the quaint charm of her use of assonance and half-rhyming vowels. Her audience grew—but gradually. Suddenly, without warning, she leaped into international prominence. Almost forty years after her death, her name became a poetic shibboleth. The year 1924 saw the publication of Martha Dickinson Bianchi's important volume, *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson*, the first collected *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (published by Little, Brown and Company) and the first English compilation, *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited with a prefatory essay by Conrad Aiken.

The enthusiasm attending the triple appearance was unbounded. Martin Armstrong, the English poet, said, "Mr. Aiken calls Emily Dickinson's poetry 'perhaps the finest by a woman in the English language.' I quarrel only with his 'perhaps.'" Nor were other plaudits less vociferous. "A feminine Blake," "an epigrammatic Walt Whitman," "a New England mystic," were a few of the characterizations fastened upon her. Other appraisals sought to "interpret" her involved but seldom obscure verses in the light of the "mystery" of her life. But "The Amherst Nun" would have

repudiated the amateur psychoanalysts as vigorously as she, whose verses and letters brim with mischievous fancy, would have laughed at their epithets.

Forty-two years after her death, an accident verging on the miraculous revealed one hundred and seventy-six hitherto unpublished poems. Their appearance in *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1929) created something of a furore. Reactions ranged from hosannahs of praise to cries of incredulity. Yet there could be no doubt of the authenticity of the new poems; Emily Dickinson's peculiar seal, her inimitable idiom was stamped on every line. Had she written nothing but this one book she would have to be reckoned among the major poets. Here again, but more brilliantly realized, are the rapid ascent of images and the sudden swoop of immensities, the keen epithet that cuts to the deepest layer of consciousness, and the paradox on whose point innumerable angels dance. She is Blake one moment, Vaughan the next, then Jonathan Edwards, and herself all the time. Emotion, idea and words are not marshaled in their usual order; they spring simultaneously, inevitably, one including the other. Here is the effect—never the affectation—of emotion and its enveloping phrase.

In the unearthed poems, even more fully than in her others, Emily Dickinson told the secret of her love, her first rebellious impulse, her inner denial, her resignation, her assured waiting for reunion in Eternity. There is little to add except meaningless names and irrelevant street numbers.

I took one draught of life,
I'll tell you what I paid,
Precisely an existence—
The market-price, they said.

They weighed me, dust by dust,
They balanced film with film,
Then handed me my being's worth—
A single dram of Heaven.

The story of that "single dram" is bare of spectacular event. In her mid-twenties, as has been related, Emily went to Philadelphia. Up to that time she had been light-hearted, a coquette; she might, she confided, have been Eve—or the belle of Amherst. In Philadelphia she attended church, heard a sermon, met the young preacher, "took the immortal wound."[1] Emily records the instant mutual recognition in a poem beginning:

[1] In *Emily Dickinson: The Human Background* (1930), Josephine Pollitt argues that her "secret love" was not the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, but Major Edward Bissell Hunt, Helen Hunt (Jackson's) first husband—Miss Pollitt's argument being plausible though not convincing.

So the eyes accost and sunder
In an audience.

And in another she tells us:

It was a quiet way
He asked if I was his.
I made no answer of the tongue
But answer of the eyes.

Their love for each other was quickly acknowledged, confirmed, established. "I'm ceded," she cried. "Mine by the right of the white election!" She reiterated it again and again: "Where thou art—that is Home." "One and one are One." "Forever at his side to walk, the smaller of the two." But reality intervened. He was a minister, married, with a child. Emily could not "be at his side," neither could she think of leaving him. She struggled; thought of daring "all for love."

Her backgrounds and her inheritance were too much for her. Suddenly, she fled back to Amherst. It is no secret that, bereft of her, the man flung all to the winds and rushed after Emily. No one knows what was said during those hours at Amherst, but both her sisters (Lavinia and Sue) held that Emily was the one who resisted. What that resistance cost her is evident in the most impassioned poems written by any woman except Sappho. Her lines run the gamut of love in absence, the unreason of emotion and the inability to reason it away, the long lethargy of grief. The man's death a few years later made her accept the finality of loss, though the resignation was no less bitter. She repeated her convictions, emphasizing them in the poems beginning, "Although I put away his life," "You see, I cannot see your lifetime," "Denial is the only fact received by the denied," "Renunciation is the choosing against itself," "You taught me waiting with myself," "Longing is like the seed that wrestles in the ground," "After great pain a formal feeling comes," "There is a languor of the life more imminent than pain," "There is a pain so utter it swallows Being up," "At leisure is the soul that gets a staggering blow." . . . This is no willing surrender to circumstance.

Then calm. Then looking forward to death, to reunion; backward to the minutiae of life magnified by thwarted emotion. It is for this reason that the divisions made by the editors in her volumes are arbitrary and misleading. "Life," "Love," "Time and Eternity" were not separate or sequential to Emily; one impinged upon and became part of the other.

It is interesting if not significant that Emily Dickinson had written but little poetry until a few years after the frustrated love

affair. In 1862, in her thirty-second year, she wrote to a friend, "I made no verse, but one or two, until this winter."

Her own words to the contrary, this statement is not strictly accurate. She had sent miniature poems to her friends for years; in her early twenties, she had delighted in making mock-heroic valentines; in 1854-5, "Sister Sue" received more than a dozen rhymes which, although not as flexible or as experimental as her later work, prove her quality. But after 1854, the poetry was wholly different in character.

That her verses were sometimes erratic, half-done, and thrown off in the heat of creation is self-evident. But, in the great majority of her poems, the leap of thought is so daring, the gaps so provocative, that passages which, in a smaller spirit, would be merely pretty or audacious conceits become snatches of revelation. Is it a flippancy or an anguished cry when, robbed by Life, she stands "a beggar before the door of God," and confronts Him with "Burglar, banker, father!" Is it anything less than Olympian satire when, asking God to accept "the supreme iniquity," she declares:

> We apologize to Thee
> For Thine own duplicity.

Beauty, love, justice—these were no abstractions to her, but entities, weights and measures, which the architect had failed to use perfectly. She sought the Builder not to commend but to question him. Emily argued, upbraided, accused Creation; she recognized an angel only when she wrestled with him. Paradox was her native element.

Her gnomic imagery was tremendous in implication and the range far greater than a first reading reveals. Although the poet often indulged herself by retreating into a style cryptic and wayward, her tiny quatrains are lavish with huge ideas and almost overpowering figures. She speaks of music as "the silver strife"; she sees the railway train "lap the miles and lick the valleys up"; she speaks ironically of splitting the lark to find the music "bulb after bulb in silver rolled"; she pictures the thunder crumbling "like a stuff" while the lightning "skipped like mice"; she glimpses evening as "the house-wife in the west" sweeping the sunset "with many colored brooms"; she asks "who laid the rainbow piers." Pondering on the power of words, she meditates:

> Could mortal lip divine
> The undeveloped freight
> Of a delivered syllable,
> 'Twould crumble with the weight.

Her letters, although marred with affectations distressingly coy, have at their best an impish irreverence and beauty. All definitions

of poetry fail to give us the very breath of the matter which Emily Dickinson evoked in an impromptu scribble:

"If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know this is poetry. These are the only ways I know it."

Her technique was as variable as her mood. Conrad Aiken has summed up her contradictions with enviable clarity; his finale is (with Mrs. Bianchi's comprehensive *Life*) one of the best introductions to Emily Dickinson yet written. "Her disregard," says Aiken, "for accepted forms or for regularities was incorrigible. Grammar, rhyme, meter,—anything went by the board if it stood in the way of thought or freedom of utterance. Sometimes this arrogance was justified; sometimes not. . . . Once adjust oneself to the spinsterly angularity of the mode, its lack of eloquence or rhetorical speed, its naïve and often prosaic directness, one discovers felicities of thought and phrase on every page. The magic is terse and sure. And ultimately one simply sighs at Miss Dickinson's singular perversity, her lapses and tyrannies, and accepts them as an inevitable part of the strange and original genius she was."

In 1884 she was stricken, like her father, with Bright's disease. Two years later, on May 16, 1886, this woman with "the soul of a monk of the Middle Ages bound up in the flesh of a Puritan" died at Amherst. Few were present at the funeral; fewer still dreamed that she would outlive the obituary in the *Springfield Republican*. Today her place is secure; her work is definitely

Of the colossal substance
Of immortality.

The obvious defects have been accepted, even exaggerated by a host of imitators; they have a charm wholly their own. Her vivacity excuses her violations; it covers self-consciousness and carries off a too frequent archness. The consistency of her imperfections is, in itself, a kind of perfection. A personal magic lies in whatever her imagination touches: a dog's "belated feet, like intermittent plush"; an engine neighing "like Boanerges"; a humming-bird, "a route of evanescence, a resonance of emerald"; a mushroom whose whole career "is shorter than a snake's delay"; the wind "tapping like a tired man"—everything is invested with a life beyond its own; every day is crowded with intimations of eternity. Within her four walls, Emily Dickinson beheld with fixed attention more than can be seen with the roving eye. She did not need the world who contained a universe.

THE POETS[1]

I reckon, when I count at all,
First Poets—then the Sun—
Then Summer—then the Heaven of God—
And then the list is done.
But looking back—the first so seems
To comprehend the whole—
The others look a needless show,
So I write Poets—All.
Their summer lasts a solid year,
They can afford a sun
The East would deem extravagant,
And if the final Heaven
Be beautiful as they disclose
To those who trust in them,
It is too difficult a grace
To justify the dream.

"OF COURSE I PRAYED—"

Of course I prayed—
And did God care?
He cared as much as
On the air
A bird had stamped her foot
And cried "Give me!"

My reason, life,
I had not had, but for yourself.
'Twere better charity
To leave me in the atom's tomb,
Merry and nought and gay and numb,
Than this smart misery.

[1] All the poems of Emily Dickinson are reprinted from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* and *Further Poems by Emily Dickinson* by special permission of the publishers, Little, Brown and Company.

"THERE IS NO FRIGATE LIKE A BOOK"

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul!

"I HAD BEEN HUNGRY ALL THE YEARS"

I had been hungry all the years;
My noon had come to dine;
I, trembling, drew the table near,
And touched the curious wine.

'Twas this on tables I had seen,
When turning, hungry, lone,
I looked in windows, for the wealth
I could not hope to own.

I did not know the ample bread;
'Twas so unlike the crumb
The birds and I had often shared
In Nature's dining-room.

The plenty hurt me, 'twas so new,—
Myself felt ill and odd,
As berry of a mountain bush
Transplanted to the road.

Nor was I hungry; so I found
That hunger was a way
Of persons outside windows,
The entering takes away.

"THE HEART ASKS PLEASURE FIRST"

The heart asks pleasure first;
And then, excuse from pain;

And then, those little anodynes
That deaden suffering;

And then, to go to sleep;
And then, if it should be
The will of its Inquisitor,
The liberty to die.

"MY LIFE CLOSED TWICE BEFORE ITS CLOSE"

My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

"I CANNOT LIVE WITH YOU"

I cannot live with you.
It would be life,
And life is over there
Behind the shelf

The sexton keeps the key to,
Putting up
Our life, his porcelain,
Like a cup

Discarded of the housewife,
Quaint or broken;
A newer Sèvres pleases,
Old ones crack.

I could not die with you,
For one must wait
To shut the other's gaze down,
You could not.

And I, could I stand by
And see you freeze,
Without my right of frost,
Death's privilege?

Nor could I rise with you,
Because your face
Would put out Jesus',
That new grace

Grow plain and foreign
On my homesick eye,
Except that you, than he
Shone closer by.

They'd judge us—how?
For you served Heaven, you know,
Or sought to;
I could not,

Because you saturated sight,
And I had no more eyes
For sordid excellence
As Paradise.

And were you lost, I would be,
Though my name
Rang loudest
On the heavenly fame.

And were you saved,
And I condemned to be
Where you were not,
That self were hell to me.

So we must keep apart,
You there, I here,
With just the door ajar
That oceans are,
And prayer,
And that pale sustenance,
Despair!

"THERE'S A CERTAIN SLANT OF LIGHT"

There's a certain slant of light,
On winter afternoons,
That oppresses, like the weight
Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives us;
We can find no scar,
But internal difference
Where the meanings are.

None may teach it anything,
'Tis the seal, despair,—
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the air.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath;
When it goes, 'tis like the distance
On the look of death.

"I HEARD A FLY BUZZ WHEN I DIED"

I heard a fly buzz when I died;
The stillness round my form
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heaves of storm.

The eyes beside had wrung them dry,
And breaths were gathering sure
For that last onset, when the king
Be witnessed in his power.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
What portion of me I
Could make assignable,—and then
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
Between the light and me;
And then the windows failed, and then
I could not see to see.

"I MEASURE EVERY GRIEF I MEET"

I measure every grief I meet
With analytic eyes;
I wonder if it weighs like mine,
Or has an easier size.

I wonder if they bore it long,
Or did it just begin?
I could not tell the date of mine,
It feels so old a pain.

I wonder if it hurts to live,
And if they have to try,
And whether, could they choose between,
They would not rather die.

I wonder if when years have piled—
Some thousands—on the cause
Of early hurt, if such a lapse
Could give them any pause;

Or would they go on aching still
Through centuries above,
Enlightened to a larger pain
By contrast with the love.

The grieved are many, I am told;
The reason deeper lies,—
Death is but one and comes but once,
And only nails the eyes.

There's grief of want, and grief of cold,—
A sort they call "despair";
There's banishment from native eyes,
In sight of native air.

And though I may not guess the kind
Correctly, yet to me
A piercing comfort it affords
In passing Calvary,

To note the fashions of the cross,
Of those that stand alone,
Still fascinated to presume
That some are like my own.

"THE BRAIN IS WIDER THAN THE SKY"

The brain is wider than the sky,
For, put them side by side,
The one the other will include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,
For, hold them, blue to blue,
The one the other will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound,
And they will differ, if they do,
As syllable from sound.

"BRING ME THE SUNSET IN A CUP"

Bring me the sunset in a cup,
Reckon the morning's flagons up,
And say how many dew;
Tell me how far the morning leaps,
Tell me what time the weaver sleeps
Who spun the breadths of blue!

Write me how many notes there be
In the new robin's ecstasy
Among astonished boughs;
How many trips the tortoise makes,
How many cups the bee partakes,—
The debauchee of dews!

Also, who laid the rainbow's piers,
Also, who leads the docile spheres
By withes of supple blue?
Whose fingers string the stalactite,
Who counts the wampum of the night,
To see that none is due?

Who built this little Alban house
And shut the windows down so close

My spirit cannot see?
Who'll let me out some gala day,
With implements to fly away,
Passing pomposity?

"A BIRD CAME DOWN THE WALK"

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,—
They looked like frightened beads, I thought
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim.

"I TASTE A LIQUOR NEVER BREWED"

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

"ELYSIUM IS AS FAR"

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door.

"I NEVER SAW A MOOR"

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

"I NEVER LOST AS MUCH"

I never lost as much but twice,
And that was in the sod;
Twice have I stood a beggar
Before the door of God!

Angels, twice descending,
Reimbursed my store.
Burglar, banker, father,
I am poor once more!

INDIAN SUMMER

These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies put on
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that can not cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze,
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to break,
Taste thine immortal wine!

"I DIED FOR BEAUTY"

I died for beauty, but was scarce
Adjusted in the tomb,
When one who died for truth was lain
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?
"For beauty," I replied.
"And I for truth,—the two are one;
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips
And covered up our names.

MYSTERIES

The murmur of a bee
A witchcraft yieldeth me.
If any ask me why,
'Twere easier to die
Than tell.

The red upon the hill
Taketh away my will;
If anybody sneer,
Take care, for God is here,
That's all.

The breaking of the day
Addeth to my degree;
If any ask me how,
Artist, who drew me so,
Must tell!

"THE SKY IS LOW"

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A traveling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him.
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

"I LIKE TO SEE IT LAP THE MILES"

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop—docile and omnipotent—
At its own stable door.

"THE TINT I CANNOT TAKE IS BEST"

The tint I cannot take is best,
The color too remote
That I could show it in bazaar
A guinea at a sight—

The fine impalpable array
That swaggers on the eye
Like Cleopatra's company
Repeated in the sky—

The moments of dominion
That happen on the Soul
And leave it with a discontent
Too exquisite to tell—

The eager look on landscapes
As if they just repressed
Some secret that was pushing,
Like chariots, in the breast—

The pleading of the Summer,
That other prank of snow
That covers mystery with tulle
For fear the squirrels know—

Their graspless manners mock us,
Until the cheated eye
Shuts arrogantly in the grave,
Another way to see.

"I DREADED THAT FIRST ROBIN SO"

I dreaded that first robin so,
But he is mastered now,
And I'm accustomed to him grown,—
He hurts a little, though.

I thought if I could only live
Till that first shout got by,
Not all pianos in the woods
Had power to mangle me.

I dared not meet the daffodils,
For fear their yellow gown
Would pierce me with a fashion
So foreign to my own.

I wished the grass would hurry,
So when 'twas time to see,
He'd be too tall, the tallest one
Could stretch to look at me.

I could not bear the bees should come,
I wished they'd stay away
In those dim countries where they go:
What word had they for me?

They're here, though; not a creature failed,
No blossom stayed away
In gentle deference to me,
A Queen of Calvary.

Each one salutes me as he goes,
And I my childish plumes
Lift, in bereaved acknowledgment
Of their unthinking drums.

"THE SOUL SELECTS"

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariots pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

"AFTER GREAT PAIN A FORMAL FEELING COMES"

After great pain a formal feeling comes—
The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
The stiff heart questions—was it He that bore?
And yesterday—or centuries before?

The feet mechanical go round
A wooden way,
Of ground or air of Ought,
Regardless grown;
A quartz contentment like a stone.

This is the hour of lead
Remembered if outlived
As freezing persons recollect
The snow—
First chill, then stupor, then
The letting go.

A CEMETERY

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.

This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

"AMPLE MAKE THIS BED"

Ample make this bed,
Make this bed with awe;
In it wait till judgment break
Excellent and fair.

Be its mattress straight,
Be its pillow round;
Let no sunrise' yellow noise
Interrupt this ground.

"ALTHOUGH I PUT AWAY HIS LIFE"

Although I put away his life,
An ornament too grand
For forehead low as mine to wear,
This might have been the hand

That sowed the flowers he preferred,
Or smoothed a homely pain,
Or pushed a pebble from his path,
Or played his chosen tune

On lute the least, the latest,
But just his ear could know
That whatsoe'er delighted it
I never would let go.

The foot to bear his errand
A little boot I know
Would leap abroad like antelope
With just the grant to do.

His weariest commandment
A sweeter to obey
Than "Hide and Seek," or skip to flutes,
Or all day chase the bee.

Your servant, Sir, will weary,
The surgeon will not come,
The world will have its own to do,
The dust will vex your fame.

The cold will force your tightest door
Some February day,
But say my apron bring the sticks
To make your cottage gay,

That I may take that promise
To Paradise with me—
To teach the angels avarice
Your kiss first taught to me!

"THE WORLD FEELS DUSTY"

The world feels dusty
When we stop to die;
We want the dew then,
Honors taste dry.

Flags vex a dying face,
But the least fan
Stirred by a friend's hand
Cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry
When thy thirst comes,
Dews of thyself to fetch
And holy balms.

HELEN HUNT JACKSON

Helen Maria Fiske was born at Amherst, Massachusetts, October 18, 1831. She was educated in her own State and was married, at twenty-one, to Captain Edward Hunt who died in 1863. She began to write poetry during her first marriage (over the initials "H. H.") and her first volume, *Verses by H. H.*, was published in 1870. She married for the second time in 1875, becoming the wife of William S. Jackson, a Colorado banker. In 1876, under the name of Helen Jackson, she brought out *Sonnets and Lyrics.*

After that time, she devoted herself mostly to prose; several novels were issued and well spoken of, but it was not until 1883 that she achieved national reputation. In that year, she received the appointment of Special Examiner into the conditions of the Mission Indians of California, her protest, *A Century of Dishonor*, having been published two years earlier. In 1884, following her researches, she published the Indian romance, *Ramona*, which has become one of the favorite legends of the West. She died in San Francisco, California, August 12, 1885.

Her poetry, extremely uneven, suffered from the extravagances of the period. Her thought was firm and clear, but an ornate language often clouded her lyrics. She was one of Emily Dickinson's few friends. They were fellow-townsmen and from girlhood, according to Martha Dickinson Bianchi, "Helen looked up to Emily as something supernatural and Emily returned her adoration." "H. H." was a charmer few could withstand and it speaks for Emily Dickinson's resistance to print that she was proof against the fascination of Mrs. Jackson who, according to Sue Dickinson, "earnestly sought her coöperation in a novel for the No Name Series, although one little poem somehow strayed into the volume of verse which appeared in that series." The influence of this friendship affected a small part of Helen Jackson's verse; a Dickinsonian trace may be found in the selection of epithets. Had the intimacy continued, the poetry of "H. H." might have been correspondingly sharper and the phrase might more often have matched the original concept.

DANGER

With what a childish and short-sighted sense
Fear seeks for safety; reckons up the days
Of danger and escape, the hours and ways
Of death; it breathless flies the pestilence;
It walls itself in towers of defense;
By land, by sea, against the storm it lays
Down barriers; then, comforted, it says:
"This spot, this hour is safe." Oh, vain pretense!
Man born of man knows nothing when he goes;
The winds blow where they list, and will disclose
To no man which brings safety, which brings risk.
The mighty are brought low by many a thing
Too small to name. Beneath the daisy's disk
Lies hid the pebble for the fatal sling.

MY STRAWBERRY

O marvel, fruit of fruits, I pause
To reckon thee. I ask what cause
Set free so much of red from heats
At core of earth, and mixed such sweets
With sour and spice: what was that strength
Which out of darkness, length by length,
Spun all thy shining thread of vine,
Netting the fields in bond as thine.
I see thy tendrils drink by sips
From grass and clover's smiling lips;
I hear thy roots dig down for wells,
Tapping the meadow's hidden cells;
Whole generations of green things,
Descended from long lines of springs,
I see make room for thee to bide
A quiet comrade by their side.
I see the creeping peoples go
Mysterious journeys to and fro,
Treading to right and left of thee,
Doing thee homage wonderingly.
I see the wild bees as they fare,
Thy cups of honey drink, but spare.
I mark thee bathe and bathe again
In sweet uncalendared spring rain.
I watch how all May has of sun
Makes haste to have thy ripeness done,
While all her nights let dews escape
To set and cool thy perfect shape.
Ah, fruit of fruits, no more I pause
To dream and seek thy hidden laws!
I stretch my hand and dare to taste,
In instant of delicious waste
On single feast, all things that went
To make the empire thou hast spent.

EMIGRAVIT

With sails full set, the ship her anchor weighs.
Strange names shine out beneath her figure-head.

What glad farewells with eager eyes are said!
What cheer for him who goes, and him who stays!
Fair skies, rich lands, new homes, and untried days
Some go to seek: the rest but wait instead,
Watching the way wherein their comrades led,
Until the next stanch ship her flag doth raise.
Who knows what myriad colonies there are
Of fairest fields, and rich, undreamed-of gains
Thick planted in the distant shining plains
Which we call sky because they lie so far?
Oh, write of me, not "Died in bitter pains,"
But "Emigrated to another star!"

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was born November 11, 1836, at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he spent most of the sixteen years which he has recorded in that delightful memoir, *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1869). After a brief clerkship, he became junior literary critic of *The Evening Mirror* at nineteen, publishing his first book (*The Bells*), an immature collection of echoes, at the same time. From 1855 to 1866 he held various journalistic positions, associating himself with the leading metropolitan *literati.* Nathaniel Willis, Bayard Taylor, Edmund Clarence Stedman, William Winter were his intimates, and their influence reënforced the inherent artificiality of Aldrich's tastes. Abetted by his associates he chose the "flicker rather than the flame"; he praised Stedman but despised Whitman, he worshiped Longfellow and belittled Poe, imitated Willis and could see nothing in Emily Dickinson except her "infelicities."

But though Aldrich mingled with the New York group, he was not part of it; he longed for the more rarefied intellectual atmosphere of New England and when, in 1866, Osgood offered him the editorship of *Every Saturday,* published in Boston, Aldrich accepted with alacrity. A few years later he became editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* holding that position from 1881 to 1890. In the meanwhile *The Ballad of Babie Bell* (1858), an incredibly banal and insincere piece of work, and *Pampinea and Other Poems* (1861) had appeared, bearing practically no relation to their times. Other volumes followed; *Complete Poems* being first issued in 1882, though in 1898 Aldrich made a comprehensive revision of all the poems he cared to preserve.

Aldrich's work falls into two sharply divided classes. The first half is full of overloaded phrase-making, fervid extravagances.

The reader sinks beneath clouds of damask, azure, emerald, pearl and gold; he is drowned in a sea of musk, aloes, tiger-lilies, spice, soft music, orchids, attar-breathing dusks. There is no real air in these verses; it is Nature as conceived by a poet reading the Arabian Nights in a hot-house. In company with Stoddard and Taylor, Aldrich dwelt in a literary Orientalism (Stoddard's *Book of the East* followed fast upon Taylor's *Poems of the Orient*) and Aldrich's *Cloth of Gold* was suffused with similar "vanilla-flavored adjectives and patchouli-scented participles" (to quote Holmes), laboring hard to create an exotic atmosphere by a wearisome profusion of lotus blossoms, sandalwood, spikenard, and diaphanous roses.

The other phase of Aldrich's art is more human in appeal and surer in artistry. He learned to sharpen his images, to fashion his smallest lyrics with a well-bred *finesse*. "In the little steel engravings that are the best expressions of his peculiar talent," writes Percy H. Boynton, "there is a fine simplicity; but it is the simplicity of an accomplished woman of the world rather than of a village maid." Although Aldrich bitterly resented the charge that he was a maker of tiny perfections, a carver of cherry-stones, those poems of his which have the best chance of permanence are some of the epigrams, the short lyrics and a few of the sonnets, passionless in tone but exquisite in design.

The best of Aldrich's diffuse poetry has been collected in an inclusive Household Edition, published by Houghton Mifflin Company. He died in 1907.

MEMORY

My mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour—
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May—
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, pausing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

"ENAMORED ARCHITECT OF AIRY RHYME"

Enamored architect of airy rhyme,
Build as thou wilt, heed not what each man says.
Good souls, but innocent of dreamers' ways,
Will come, and marvel why thou wastest time;
Others, beholding how thy turrets climb
'Twixt theirs and heaven, will hate thee all thy days;
But most beware of those who come to praise.
O wondersmith, O worker in sublime
And heaven-sent dreams, let art be all in all;
Build as thou wilt, unspoiled by praise or blame,
Build as thou wilt, and as thy light is given;
Then, if at last the airy structure fall,
Dissolve, and vanish—take thyself no shame.
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

IDENTITY

Somewhere—in desolate wind-swept space—
In Twilight-land—in No-man's land—
Two hurrying Shapes met face to face,
And bade each other stand.

"And who are you?" cried one agape,
Shuddering in the gloaming light.
"I know not," said the second Shape,
"I only died last night!"

REALISM

Romance beside his unstrung lute
Lies stricken mute.
The old-time fire, the antique grace,
You will not find them anywhere.
Today we breathe a commonplace,
Polemic, scientific air:
We strip Illusion of her veil;
We vivisect the nightingale
To probe the secret of his note.
The Muse in alien ways remote
Goes wandering.

John Burroughs was born in Roxbury, New York, April 3, 1837. He was reared on his father's farm and in early life was a teacher, journalist, fruit-cultivator. For almost ten years, he was a clerk in the Treasury Department in Washington (from 1863 to 1872) but his early rural life determined his later pursuits. In 1874, he forsook cities, immuring himself on a fruit-farm at West Park, New York. He died March 29, 1921, on his way from California to his home.

One of the best known American naturalists, such books as *Birds and Poets* (1877), *Locusts and Wild Honey* (1879), *Ways of Nature* (1905), *Under the Apple Trees* (1916), declare Burroughs a poet as well as an essayist. Much of his writing took the actual form of verse, a volume of poems, *Bird and Bough*, appearing in 1906. In an era of formalism, his was a free spirit. He championed the cause of Walt Whitman as early as 1867, returning to the subject in 1896 with *Whitman: A Study*. His later works, increasingly philosophic, together with his studies of New England flora and fauna, ranked him as the somewhat milder successor of Thoreau. His life and work reflected his intimacy with Nature and a perception of the laws beyond it.

WAITING

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
  Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
  For, lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
  For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
  And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
  The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
  Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
  I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
  And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high.
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN HAY

John Hay was born October 8, 1838, in Salem, Indiana, graduated from Brown University in 1858 and was admitted to the Illinois bar a few years later. At nineteen, when he went back to Warsaw, the little Mississippi town where he had lived as a boy, he dreamed only of being a poet—a poet, it must be added, of the pleasantly conventional, transition type. But the Civil War was to disturb his mild fantasies. He went to the front and saw active service under General Hunter. He became private secretary to Lincoln, then major and assistant adjutant-general under General Gilmore, then a colonel by brevet, then secretary of the Legation at Paris, *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna and Secretary of Legation at Madrid.

His few vivid *Pike County Ballads* came more as a happy accident than as a deliberate creative effort. When Hay returned from Spain in 1870, bringing with him his *Castilian Days*, he still had visions of becoming an orthodox lyric poet. But he found every one reading Bret Harte's short stories and the new expression of the rude West. (See Preface.) He speculated upon the possibility of doing something similar, translating the characters into poetry. The result was the six racy ballads in a vein utterly different from everything Hay wrote before or after. The poet-politician seems to have regarded this series somewhat in the nature of light, extempore verse, belonging to a far lower plane than his serious publications; he talked about them reluctantly; he even hoped that these "diversions" would be forgotten. It is difficult to say whether this regret grew because Hay, loving the refinements of culture, at heart hated any suggestion of vulgarity, or because of a basic lack of courage—Hay having published his novel of labor unrest in the early 80's (*The Breadwinners*) anonymously, refusing to acknowledge the authorship for years.

The fact remains, his rhymes of Pike County have survived all

his more "classical" lines. They served for a time as a fresh influence; they remain a creative accomplishment. "Banty Tim" is quoted not only for its own sake, but as an interesting anticipation of Kipling's "Gunga Din"; "Jim Bludso" was the first of a long line of dramatic "recitations."

Hay was in politics all the later part of his life, ranking as one of the most brilliant Secretaries of State the country has ever had. Under President Hayes he was ambassador to Great Britain. In collaboration with J. G. Nicolay he wrote a most authoritative and vivid life of Lincoln, a biography which was unequaled until Carl Sandburg's two volumes. He died in 1905.

JIM BLUDSO

OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE

Wall, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
  Becase he don't live, you see;
Leastways, he's got out of the habit
  Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
  That you haven't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
  The night of the Prairie Belle?

He warn't no saint,—them engineers
  Is all pretty much alike,—
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
  And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
  And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked, and he never lied,—
  I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had:
  To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
  To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire,
  A thousand times he swore,
He'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
  Till the last soul got ashore.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *wouldn't* be passed.
And so she came tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clar'd the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
Thar was runnin' and cussin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat
Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
And they all had trust in his cussedness,
And knowed he would keep his word.
And, sure's you're born, they all got off
Afore the smokestacks fell,—
And Bludso's ghost went up alone
In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He warn't no saint,—but at jedgement
I'd run my chance with Jim,
'Longside of some pious gentlemen
That wouldn't shook hands with him.
He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing,—
And went for it thar and then;
And Christ ain't a-goin' to be too hard
On a man that died for men.

BANTY TIM

(*Remarks of Sergeant Tilmon Joy to the White Man's Committee of Spunky Point, Illinois*)

I reckon I git your drift, gents,—
You 'low the boy sha'n't stay;

This is a white man's country;
You're Dimocrats, you say;
And whereas, and seein', and wherefore,
The times bein' all out o' j'int,
The nigger has got to mosey
From the limits o' Spunky P'int!

Let's reason the thing a minute:
I'm an old-fashioned Dimocrat too,
Though I laid my politics out o' the way
For to keep till the war was through.
But I come back here, allowin'
To vote as I used to do,
Though it gravels me like the devil to train
Along o' sich fools as you.

Now dog my cats ef I kin see,
In all the light of the day,
What you've got to do with the question
Ef Tim shill go or stay.
And furder than that I give notice,
Ef one of you tetches the boy,
He kin check his trunks to a warmer clime
Than he'll find in Illanoy.

Why, blame your hearts, jest hear me!
You know that ungodly day
When our left struck Vicksburg Heights, how ripped
And torn and tattered we lay.
When the rest retreated I stayed behind,
Fur reasons sufficient to me,—
With a rib caved in, and a leg on a strike,
I sprawled on that damned glacee.

Lord! how the hot sun went for us,
And br'iled and blistered and burned!
How the Rebel bullets whizzed round us
When a cuss in his death-grip turned!
Till along toward dusk I seen a thing
I couldn't believe for a spell:
That nigger—that Tim—was a-crawlin' to me
Through that fire-proof, gilt-edged hell!

The Rebels seen him as quick as me,
And the bullets buzzed like bees;
But he jumped for me, and shouldered me,
Though a shot brought him once to his knees;
But he staggered up, and packed me off,
With a dozen stumbles and falls,
Till safe in our lines he drapped us both,
His black hide riddled with balls.

So, my gentle gazelles, thar's my answer,
And here stays Banty Tim:
He trumped Death's ace for me that day,
And I'm not goin' back on him!
You may rezoloot till the cows come home,
But ef one of you tetches the boy,
He'll wrastle his hash tonight in hell,
Or my name's not Tilmon Joy!

JAMES RYDER RANDALL

James Ryder Randall was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1839. He was a student at Georgetown University at Washington, D. C., and later engaged in journalism through the South. While in Louisiana, at the time of the Civil War, he composed "Maryland. My Maryland" which was adopted as a battle-hymn and was second in favor only to "Dixie."

Although he wrote chiefly in the 1860's, it was not until 1908 that his first volume was collected and issued under the title of *Maryland, My Maryland and Other Poems.* Two years after his death (in Augusta, Georgia, on January 15, 1908) a volume, *The Poems of James Ryder Randall* (1910) was edited with an Introduction by Matthew Page Andrews. Randall's name is unknown today, and his impassioned lyric is the one poem of his which, in spite of over-excitation and shrieking rhetoric, has survived.

MY MARYLAND

The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!

Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland!
My Mother State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust,
And all thy slumbers with the just,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Come! For thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! For thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!
Come to thine own heroic throng
Stalking with Liberty along,
And chant thy dauntless slogan-song,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
For thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek,
From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland, my Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland, my Maryland!

I hear the distant thunder hum,
Maryland!
The Old Line's bugle, fife and drum,
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb;
Huzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes! She burns! She'll come!
She'll come!
Maryland, my Maryland!

BRET HARTE

Francis Bret Harte was born August 25, 1839, at Albany, New York. (In certain quarters doubt is thrown on the date of his birth. One or two sources maintain that a compositor, upsetting a 6, made the "correct" date, 1836, "wrongly" 1839. However, practically all of the encyclopedias and biographies agree upon 1839 as authentic.) His childhood was spent in various cities of the East. Late in 1853 his widowed mother went to California with a party of relatives, and two months later, when he was fifteen, Bret Harte and his sister followed. During the next few years he was engaged in school-teaching, typesetting, politics, mining and journalism, becoming editor of *The Overland Monthly* in San Francisco in 1868.

Harte's fame came suddenly. Late in the Sixties he had written a burlesque in rhyme of two Western gamblers trying to fleece a guileless Chinaman who claimed to know nothing about cards, but who, it turned out, was scarcely as innocent as he appeared. Harte, in the midst of writing serious poetry, had put the verses aside as too crude and trifling for publication. Some time later, just as *The Overland Monthly* was going to press, it was discovered that the form was one page short. Having nothing else on hand, Harte had these rhymes set up. Instead of passing unno-

ticed, the poem was quoted everywhere; it swept the West and captivated the East. When *The Luck of Roaring Camp* followed, Harte became not only a national but an international figure. England acclaimed him and *The Atlantic Monthly* paid him $10,000 to write for a year in his Pike County vein.

East and West Poems appeared in 1871; in 1872 Harte published an enlarged *Political Works* including many earlier pieces. His scores of short stories represent Harte at his best; "M'liss," "Tennessee's Partner," "The Outcast of Poker Flat"—these are the work of a lesser, transplanted Dickens. His novels (*Maruja* was published in 1885) are of minor importance; they are carelessly constructed, theatrically conceived, his characters being no more than badly wired marionettes that betray their manipulator with every movement.

His serious poetry has many of the faults of his prose. A melodramatic crudeness alternates with an equally exaggerated sentimentalism; even those verses not in dialect (like "What the Bullet Sang") suffer from defects of emphasis. But the occasional verse will remain to delight readers who rarely glance at Harte's other work except for documentation.

In 1872 Harte, encouraged by his success, returned to his native East; in 1878 he went to Germany as consul at Crefeld. Two years later he was transferred to Scotland and, after five years there, went to London, where he remained the rest of his life. Harte's later period remains mysteriously shrouded. He never came back to America, not even for a visit; he ceased to correspond with his family; he separated himself from all the most intimate associations of his early life. He died, suddenly, at Camberley, England, May 6, 1902.

"JIM"

Say there! P'r'aps
Some on you chaps
  Might know Jim Wild?
Well,—no offense:
Thar ain't no sense
  In gittin' riled!

Jim was my chum
  Up on the Bar:
That's why I come
  Down from up yar,

Lookin' for Jim.
Thank ye, sir! *You*
Ain't of that crew,—
  Blest if you are!

Money? Not much:
  That ain't my kind;
I ain't no such.
  Rum? I don't mind,
Seein' it's you.

Well, this yer Jim,—
Did you know him?
Jes' 'bout your size;
Same kind of eyes;—
Well, that is strange:
  Why, it's two year
  Since he came here,
Sick, for a change.

Well, here's to us:
    Eh?
The h—— you say!
    Dead?
That little cuss?

What makes you star',
You over thar?
Can't a man drop
's glass in yer shop
But you must r'ar?
  It wouldn't take
  D—d much to break
You and your bar.

    Dead!
Poor—little—Jim!
Why, thar was me,
Jones, and Bob Lee,
Harry and Ben,—
No-account men:
Then to take *him!*

Well, thar—Good-by.
No more, sir—I—
Eh?
What's that you say?
Why, dern it!—sho!—
No? Yes! By Joe!
Sold!
Sold! Why, you limb.
You ornery,
Derned, old,
Long-legged Jim.

PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

(Table Mountain, 1870)

Which I wish to remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,
Which the same I would rise to explain.

Ah Sin was his name;
And I shall not deny,
In regard to the same,
What that name might imply;
But his smile it was pensive and childlike,
As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.

It was August the third,
And quite soft was the skies;
Which it might be inferred
That Ah Sin was likewise;
Yet he played it that day upon William
And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,
And Ah Sin took a hand:
It was Euchre. The same
He did not understand;
But he smiled as he sat by the table,
With a smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked
In a way that I grieve,
And my feelings were shocked
At the state of Nye's sleeve,
Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,
And the same with intent to deceive.

But the hands that were played
By that heathen Chinee,
And the points that he made,
Were quite frightful to see,—
Till at last he put down a right bower,
Which the same Nye had dealt unto me!

Then I looked up at Nye,
And he gazed upon me;
And he rose with a sigh,
And said, "Can this be?
We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor,"—
And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued
I did not take a hand,
But the floor it was strewed
Like the leaves on the strand
With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,
In the game "he did not understand."

In his sleeves, which were long,
He has twenty-four packs,—
Which was coming it strong,
Yet I state but the facts;
And we found on his nails, which were taper,
What is frequent in tapers,—that's wax.

Which is why I remark,
And my language is plain,
That for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain,
The heathen Chinee is peculiar,—
Which the same I am free to maintain.

WHAT THE BULLET SANG

O joy of creation,
To be!
O rapture, to fly
And be free!
Be the battle lost or won,
Though the smoke shall hide the sun,
I shall find my love, the one
Born for me!

I shall know him where he stands
All alone,
With the power in his hands
Not o'erthrown;
I shall know him by his face,
By his godlike front and grace;
I shall hold him for a space
All my own!

It is he—O my love!
So bold!
It is I—all thy love
Foretold!
It is I—O love, what bliss!
Dost thou answer to my kiss?
O sweetheart! what is this
Lieth there so cold?

THE AGED STRANGER

(*An Incident of the Civil War*)

"I was with Grant"—the stranger said;
Said the farmer, "Say no more,
But rest thee here at my cottage porch,
For thy feet are weary and sore."

"I was with Grant"—the stranger said;
Said the farmer, "Nay, no more.
I prithee sit at my frugal board,
And eat of my humble store.

"How fares my boy,—my soldier boy,
Of the old Ninth Army Corps?
I warrant he bore him gallantly
In the smoke and the battle's roar!"

"I know him not," said the aged man,
"And, as I remarked before,
I was with Grant"—"Nay, nay, I know,"
Said the farmer, "say no more.

"He fell in battle,—I see, alas!
Thou'dst smooth these tidings o'er.
Nay, speak the truth, whatever it be,
Though it rend my bosom's core."

"I cannot tell," said the aged man,
"And should have remarked before,
That I was with Grant,—in Illinois,—
Three years before the war."

Then the farmer spake him never a word,
But beat with his fist full sore
That aged man, who had worked for Grant
Three years before the war.

JOAQUIN MILLER

Joaquin Miller was, as he desired to be, a mysterious figure. The date of his birth is conjectural; even his name is a matter of doubt. However, from recent evidence—particularly the researches of Frank R. Reade—it seems safe to say that his name was originally Cincinnatus Hiner Miller: Cincinnatus, according to his brother, "for a certain Roman General (!) and mother named him Hiner for Dr. Hiner, who brought him into the world." Although Joaquin Miller claimed that his middle name was "Heine" and that his mother named him Heine because of her love for the German poet, there is proof that Miller adopted the Heine *after* he had heard of the famous author of *Buch der Lieder*. The date of his birth is also disputed. March tenth seems to be the favored day assigned to his entry into the world and, although 1839 has been advanced as the latest "definite" date, most biographers choose 1841 as the year in which Miller was born.

A few facts are indisputable. Miller was of mixed Dutch and Scotch stock—not, as has been asserted, of immigrant parents—his father's father having been killed at Fort Meigs in the War of 1812. As Miller himself wrote (and this particular bit of biography has stood the scrutiny of his more exact commentators), "My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west. I was born in a covered wagon, I am told, at or about the time it crossed the line dividing Indiana from Ohio." When Miller was twelve, his family left the mid-West with "two big heavily laden wagons, with eight yoke of oxen to each, a carriage and two horses for mother and baby sister, and a single horse for the three boys to ride." The distance covered in their cross-country exodus (they took a roundabout route to Oregon) was nearly three thousand miles. The time consumed, he records, "was seven months and five days. There were no bridges, no railroad levels, nothing of the sort. . . . Many times, at night, after ascending a stream to find a ford, we could look back and see our smoldering campfires of the day before." This journey made a lasting impression on the boy's impressionable mind; it was this tortuous wandering that gave Miller his reverence for the West in general and the pioneer in particular. After two years in the Oregon home, he ran away to find gold.

At fifteen we find Miller living with the Indians as one of them: in 1859 (at the age of eighteen) he attends a mission-school "college" in Eugene, Oregon; between 1860 and 1865 he is express-messenger, editor of a pacifist newspaper that is suppressed for opposing the Civil War, lawyer and, occasionally, a poet. He holds a minor judgeship from 1866 to 1870.

His first book (*Specimens*) appears in 1868, his second (*Joaquin et al.*, from which he took his name) in 1869. No response—not even from "the bards of San Francisco Bay" to whom he had dedicated the latter volume. He is chagrined, discouraged, angry. He resolves to quit America, to go to the land that has always been the nursing-ground of poets. "Three months later, September 1, 1870, I was kneeling at the grave of Burns. I really expected to die there in the land of my fathers." He arrives in London, unheralded, unknown. He takes his manuscripts to one publisher after another with the same negative result. Finally, with a pioneer desperation, he prints privately one hundred copies of his *Pacific Poems*, sending them out for review. Sensation! The reversal of Miller's fortunes is one of the most startling in all literature. The reviews are a series of superlatives, the personal tributes still more fervid. He becomes famous overnight. He is fêted, lauded, lionized; he is ranked as an equal of Browning, given a dinner by the Pre-Raphaelites, acclaimed as "the great interpreter of America," "the Byron of Oregon!"

His dramatic success in England is easily explained. He brought to the calm air of literary London, a breath of the great winds of the plain. The more he exaggerated his crashing effects, the louder he roared, the better the English public liked it. When he entered Victorian parlors in his velvet jacket, hip-boots and flowing hair, childhood visions of the "wild and woolly Westerner" were realized and the very bombast of his work was glorified as "typically American."

And yet, for all his overstressed muscularity, Miller is strangely lacking in creative energy. His whipped-up rhetoric cannot disguise the essential weakness of his verse. It is, in spite of a certain breeziness and a few magnificent descriptions of cañons and mountain-chains, feeble as well as false, full of cheap heroics, atrocious taste, impossible men and women. (See Preface.) One or two individual poems, like "Crossing the Plains," "The Yukon," and parts of his apostrophes to the Sierras, the Pacific Ocean and the Missouri River may live; the rest seem doomed to extinction.

From 1872 to 1876 Miller traveled in Europe and the Holy Land, and, although he speaks of being in Egypt in 1879, there is good ground for believing this to be another romantic exaggeration. At all events, he built a log cabin in Washington in 1883, after spending some time in Boston and New York. After being married for the third time, he returned to California in 1885. In 1886 he bought "The Hights" and tried to found an experimental Greek Academy for aspiring writers. He died there, after a determinedly picturesque life, in sight of the Golden Gate in 1913.

BY THE PACIFIC OCEAN[1]

Here room and kingly silence keep
Companionship in state austere;
The dignity of death is here,
The large, lone vastness of the deep.
Here toil has pitched his camp to rest:
The west is banked against the west.

Above yon gleaming skies of gold
One lone imperial peak is seen;
While gathered at his feet in green
Ten thousand foresters are told.
And all so still! so still the air
That duty drops the web of care.

[1] Permission to reprint the poems of Joaquin Miller was granted by the Harr Wagner Publishing Co., San Francisco, California, publishers of *Joaquin Miller's Complete Poetical Works.*

Beneath the sunset's golden sheaves
The awful deep walks with the deep,
Where silent sea-doves slip and sweep,
And commerce keeps her loom and weaves.
The dead red men refuse to rest;
Their ghosts illume my lurid West.

CROSSING THE PLAINS

What great yoked brutes with briskets low,
With wrinkled necks like buffalo,
With round, brown, liquid, pleading eyes,
That turn'd so slow and sad to you.
That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,
That seem'd to plead, and make replies,
The while they bow'd their necks and drew
The creaking load; and looked at you.
Their sable briskets swept the ground,
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine;
Two sullen captive kings were they,
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crush'd the sod
With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,
As if 'twere something still to be
Kings even in captivity.

FROM "BYRON"

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I do not dare to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

THE ARCTIC MOON

(*From "The Yukon"*)

The moon resumed all heaven now,
She shepherded the stars below
Along her wide, white steeps of snow,
Nor stooped nor rested, where or how.
She bared her full white breast, she dared
The sun to show his face again.
She seemed to know no change, she kept
Carousal constantly, nor slept,
Nor turned aside a breath, nor spared
The fearful meaning, the mad pain,
The weary eyes, the poor dazed brain,
That came at last to feel, to see
The dread, dead touch of lunacy.

How loud the silence! Oh, how loud!
How more than beautiful the shroud
Of dead Light in the moon-mad north
When great torch-tipping stars stand forth
Above the black, slow-moving pall
As at some fearful funeral!

The moon blares as mad trumpets blare
To marshaled warriors long and loud;
The cobalt blue knows not a cloud,
But, oh, beware that moon, beware
Her ghostly, graveyard, moon-mad stare!
Beware white silence more than white!
Beware the five-horned starry rune;
Beware the groaning gorge below;
Beware the wide, white world of snow,
Where trees hang white as hooded nun—
No thing not white, not one, not one!
But most beware that mad white moon.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

Edward Rowland Sill was born at Windsor, Connecticut, in 1841. In 1861 he was graduated from Yale and shortly thereafter

his poor health compelled him to go West. After various unsuccessful experiments, he drifted into teaching, first in the high schools in Ohio, later in the English department of the University of California. His uncertain physical condition added to his mental uncertainty. Unable to ally himself either with the lethargic, conservative forces whom he hated or with the radicals whom he distrusted, Sill became an uncomfortable solitary; half rebellious, half resigned. During the last decade of his life, his brooding seriousness was less pronounced, a lighter irony took the place of his dark reflections. Although Sill remains among the minor poets both in scope and style, a few of his poems (such as "The Fool's Prayer" and "Opportunity") have established themselves securely; they will keep Sill's name alive for many years.

The Hermitage, his first volume, was published in 1867, a later edition (including later poems) appearing in 1889. His two posthumous books are *Poems* (1887) and *Hermione and Other Poems* (1899). A volume of his prose "essays in literature and education" was published in 1900. His later and little known work deserved—and deserves—a wider audience. It established a serenity that was not without flashes of spirit, a gravity compounded with quiet wit.

Sill died, after bringing something of the Eastern culture to the West, in 1887.

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
Blunt thing—!" he snapt, and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

SOLITUDE

All alone—alone,
Calm, as on a kingly throne,
Take thy place in the crowded land,
Self-centered in free self-command.
Let thy manhood leave behind
The narrow ways of the lesser mind:
What to thee are its little cares,
The feeble love or the spite it bears?
Let the noisy crowd go by:
In thy lonely watch on high,
Far from the chattering tongues of men,
Sitting above their call or ken
Free from links of manner and form
Thou shalt learn of the wingèd storm—
God shall speak to thee out of the sky.

DARE YOU?

Doubting Thomas and loving John,
Behind the others walking on:—

"Tell me now, John, dare you be
One of the minority?
To be lonely in your thought,
Never visited nor sought,
Shunned with secret shrug, to go
Thro' the world, esteemed its foe:
To be singled out and hissed,
Pointed at as one unblessed,
Warned against in whispers faint,
Lest the children catch a taint;
To bear off your titles well,—
Heretic and infidel?
If you dare, come now with me,
Fearless, confident, and free."

"Thomas, do you dare to be
Of the great majority?
To be only, as the rest,
With Heaven's creature comforts blessed;

To accept, in humble part,
Truth that shines on every heart;
Never to be set on high,
Where the envious curses fly;
Never name or fame to find,
Still outstripped in soul and mind;
To be hid, unless to God,
As one grass-blade in the sod,
Underfoot with millions trod?
If you dare, come with us, be
Lost in love's great unity."

THE FOOL'S PRAYER

The royal feast was done; the King
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

" 'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

SIDNEY LANIER

Sidney Lanier was born at Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842. His was a family of musicians (Lanier himself was a skillful performer on various instruments), and it is not surprising that his verse emphasizes—even overstresses—the influence of music on poetry. He attended Oglethorpe College, graduating at the age of eighteen (1860), and, a year later, volunteered as a private in the Confederate army. After several months' imprisonment (he had been captured while acting as signal officer on a blockade-runner), Lanier was released in February, 1865, returning from Point Lookout to Georgia on foot, accompanied only by his flute. His physical health, never the most robust, had been further impaired by his incarceration, and he was already suffering from tuberculosis, the rest of his life being spent in an unequal struggle against it.

He was now only twenty-three years old and the problem of choosing a vocation was complicated by his marriage in 1867. He spent five years in the study and practice of law, during which time he wrote comparatively little verse. But the law could not hold him; he felt premonitions of death and realized he must devote his talents to art before it was too late. He was fortunate enough to obtain a position as flautist with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra in 1873 in Baltimore, where he had free access to the music and literature he craved. Here he wrote all his best poetry. In 1879, he was made lecturer on English in Johns Hopkins University, and it was for his courses there that he wrote his chief prose work, a brilliant if inconclusive study, *The Science*

of English Verse. Besides his poetry, he wrote several books for boys, the two most popular being *The Boys' Froissart* (1878) and *The Boys' King Arthur* (1880).

Lanier's poetry suffers from his all too frequent theorizing, his too-conscious effort to bring verse over into the province of pure music. He thought almost entirely in terms of musical form. His main theory that English verse has for its essential basis not *accent* but a strict musical *quantity* is a wholly erroneous conclusion, possible only to one who could write "whatever turn I have for art is purely musical—poetry being with me a mere tangent into which I shoot." Lanier is at his best in his ballads, although a few of his lyrics have a similar spontaneity. In spite of the fact that he had novel schemes of rhythm and stanza-structure, much of his work is marred by strained effects, literary conceits (especially his use of pseudo-Shakespearean images) and a kind of verse that approaches mere pattern-making. But such a ballad as "The Song of the Chattahoochee," lyrics like "Night and Day," and parts of the symphonic "Hymns of the Marshes" have won a place in American literature. His triumphs over the exigencies of disease and his accomplishments in two self-tutored arts were the result of undefeated spirit, a bravery that dazzled his commentators who confused the attainments of courage with those of creation. Never a great figure, Lanier was one of the more interesting of our minor poets.

A comprehensive collection of Lanier's verse was first issued in 1906: *Collected Poems of Sidney Lanier*, edited by his wife, with a memorial by William Hayes Ward. It includes not only the poet's well-known musical experiments, but the rarely printed dialect verses and all that remains of "The Jacquerie."

Lanier died, a victim of his disease, in the mountains of North Carolina, September 7, 1881.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE[1]

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain

[1] All of Lanier's lines are reprinted from *Poems of Sidney Lanier.* Copyright, 1884, 1891, 1916, by Mary D. Lanier, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay,*
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or acloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,

The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

NIGHT AND DAY

The innocent, sweet Day is dead.
Dark Night hath slain her in her bed.
O, Moors are as fierce to kill as to wed!
—Put out the light, said he.

A sweeter light than ever rayed
From star of heaven or eye of maid
Has vanished in the unknown Shade
—She's dead, she's dead, said he.

Now, in a wild, sad after-mood
The tawny Night sits still to brood
Upon the dawn-time when he wooed
—I would she lived, said he.

Star-memories of happier times,
Of loving deeds and lovers' rhymes,
Throng forth in silvery pantomimes.
—Come back, O Day! said he.

FROM "THE MARSHES OF GLYNN"

Inward and outward to northward and southward the beach-lines linger and curl
As a silver-wrought garment clings to and follows the firm sweet limbs of a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh and the sea and the sky!

A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main.

. . . . . .

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.

Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.
How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and breadth of the marvelous marshes of Glynn.

SONG FOR "THE JACQUERIE"

The hound was cuffed, the hound was kicked,
O' the ears was cropped, o' the tail was nicked,
(*All.*) Oo-hoo-o, *howled the hound.*
The hound into his kennel crept;
He rarely wept, he never slept.
His mouth he always open kept
Licking his bitter wound,
The hound,
(*All.*) U-lu-lo, *howled the hound.*

A star upon his kennel shone
That showed the hound a meat-bare bone.
(*All.*) O hungry was the hound!
The hound had but a churlish wit.
He seized the bone, he crunched, he bit.
"An thou wert Master, I had slit
Thy throat with a huge wound,"
Quo' hound.
(*All.*) O, angry was the hound.

The star in castle-window shone,
The Master lay abed, alone.
(*All.*) Oh ho, why not? quo' hound.
He leapt, he seized the throat, he tore
The Master, head from neck, to floor,
And rolled the head i' the kennel door,
And fled and salved his wound,
Good hound!
(*All.*) U-lu-lo, *howled the hound.*

A BALLAD OF THE TREES AND THE MASTER

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came.

CHARLES EDWARD CARRYL

Charles Edward Carryl, father of Guy Wetmore Carryl (see page 211), was born in New York City, December 30, 1842. He was an officer and director in various railroads but found leisure to write two of the few rivals of the immortal *Alice in Wonderland.* These two, *Davy and the Goblin* (1884), which has gone through twenty printings, and *The Admiral's Caravan* (1891), contain many lively and diverting ballads. But the best of the elder Carryl is neither his twinkling prose nor his semi-narrative stanzas but the mock monologues and the inspired nonsense verses

in the manner of Lewis Carroll who, due to the slight difference in spelling, is sometimes confused with him.

C. E. Carryl lived the greater part of his life in New York, but on retiring from business, removed to Boston and lived there until his death, which occurred in the summer of 1920.

THE PLAINT OF THE CAMEL

"Canary-birds feed on sugar and seed,
Parrots have crackers to crunch;
And as for the poodles, they tell me the noodles
Have chickens and cream for their lunch.
But there's never a question
About MY digestion—
ANYTHING does for me!

"Cats, you're aware, can repose in a chair,
Chickens can roost upon rails;
Puppies are able to sleep in a stable,
And oysters can slumber in pails.
But no one supposes
A poor Camel dozes—
ANY PLACE does for me!

"Lambs are enclosed where it's never exposed,
Coops are constructed for hens;
Kittens are treated to houses well heated,
And pigs are protected by pens.
But a Camel comes handy
Wherever it's sandy—
ANYWHERE does for me!

"People would laugh if you rode a giraffe,
Or mounted the back of an ox;
It's nobody's habit to ride on a rabbit,
Or try to bestraddle a fox.
But as for a Camel, he's
Ridden by families—
ANY LOAD does for me!

"A snake is as round as a hole in the ground;
Weasels are wavy and sleek;
And no alligator could ever be straighter
Than lizards that live in a creek.

But a Camel's all lumpy
And bumpy and humpy—
ANY SHAPE does for me!"

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em;
For they never, never found 'em
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study,—
For the Goat is very clever at a sum,—
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars,
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

LLOYD MIFFLIN

Lloyd Mifflin was born in Columbia, Pennsylvania, September 15, 1846, the son of Houston Mifflin, the portrait painter. He himself was an artist, but was forced to abandon painting in 1877 on account of poor health. After that date he devoted himself entirely to literary work, publishing six volumes of poems, the most interesting of them being *At the Gates of Song* (1897) and *The Fields of Dawn* (1900). He died in 1921.

Much of Mifflin's verse is doomed to extinction; in fact, most of it has already died. He wrote entirely in the poetic diction of his day, in a rolling rhetoric with which we today are wholly out of touch and sympathy. In the amassing of grandiose terms and the

piling up of metaphors, Mifflin was the forerunner of George Sterling and other poets of his persuasion. Yet, for all the faults of exaggeration and gaudiness of structure, some of Mifflin's sonnets attain a vague splendor. "The Harvest Waits" is one of these —a neglected poem in which the startling imagery fulfills and even amplifies the large conception.

SESOSTRIS

Sole Lord of Lords and very King of Kings,
He sits within the desert, carved in stone;
Inscrutable, colossal, and alone,
And ancienter than memory of things.
Graved on his front the sacred beetle clings;
Disdain sits on his lips; and in a frown
Scorn lives upon his forehead for a crown.
The affrighted ostrich dare not dust her wings
Anear this Presence. The long caravan's
Dazed camels stop, and mute the Bedouins stare.
This symbol of past power more than man's
Presages doom. Kings look—and Kings despair:
Their scepters tremble in their jeweled hands,
And dark thrones totter in the baleful air!

"THE HARVEST WAITS"

God hath been patient long. In eons past
He plowed the waste of Chaos. He hath sown
The furrows with His worlds, and from His throne
Showered, like grain, planets upon the Vast.
What meed of glory hath He from the past?
Shall He not reap, who hears but prayer and groan?
The harvest waits. . . . He cometh to His own,—
He who shall scythe the starry host at last.
When the accumulated swarms of Death
Glut the rank worlds as rills are choked by leaves,
Then shall God flail the million orbs, as sheaves
Unfruitful gleaned; and, in His age sublime,
Winnow the gathered stars, and with a breath
Whirl the spurned chaff adown the void of Time!

James Whitcomb Riley, who was possibly the most widely read native poet of his day, was born October 7, 1849, in Greenfield, Indiana, a small town twenty miles from Indianapolis, where he spent his later years. Contrary to popular belief, Riley was not, as many have gathered from his bucolic poems, a struggling child of the soil; his father was a lawyer in comfortable circumstances and Riley was given not only a good education, but was prepared for the law. His temperament, however, craved something more adventurous. At eighteen he shut the heavy pages of Blackstone, slipped out of the office and joined a traveling troupe of actors who sold patent medicines during the intermissions. Riley's functions were varied: he beat the bass-drum, painted their flaring banners, wrote local versions of old songs, coached the actors and, when occasion arose, took part in the performance himself.

Even before this time, Riley had begun to send verses to the newspapers, young experiments, bits of homely sentiment, simple snatches and elaborate hoaxes—the poem "Leonainie," published over the initials "E. A. P.," being accepted in many quarters as a newly discovered poem by Poe. In 1882, when he was on the staff of the Indianapolis *Journal*, he began the series of dialect poems which he claimed were by a rude and unlettered farmer, one "Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the Hoosier poet"—printing long extracts from "Johnson's" ungrammatical and badly spelt letters to prove his find. A collection of these rustic verses appeared, in 1883, as *The Ole Swimmin' Hole;* and Riley leaped into widespread popularity.

Other collections followed rapidly: *Afterwhiles* (1887), *Old-Fashioned Roses* (1888), *Pipes o' Pan at Zekesbury* (1889), *Rhymes of Childhood* (1890). All met an instant response; Riley endeared himself, by his homely idiom and his childlike ingenuity, to a countryful of readers, adolescent and adult.

But Riley's simplicity is seldom as artless as it seems. Time and again, one can watch him trading wantonly on the emotions of his unsophisticated readers. He sees them about to smile—and broadens the point of his joke; he observes them on the point of tears—and pulls out the sobbing *tremolo* stop. In many respects, he is patently the most artificial of those poets who claim to give us the stuff of the soil. He is the poet of obtrusive sentiment rather than of quiet convictions, of lulling assurance, of philosophies that never disturb his readers, of sweet truisms rather than searching truths. His influence has given rise to an entire school of "cheerful philosophy" versifiers; its lowest ebb may be seen in the newspaper columns of the "A Smile a Day" variety and the syndicated sirup of Edgar A. Guest.

That work of his which may endure, will survive because of the personal flavor that Riley often gave it. Such poems as "When the Frost Is on the Punkin," and "The Raggedy Man," seem part of American folk-literature; "Little Orphant Annie" was read wherever there was a schoolhouse or, for that matter, a nursery. In 1912 the schools throughout the country observed his birthday.

Riley died in his little house in Lockerbie Street, Indianapolis, July 22, 1916.

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"[1]

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it—but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

A PARTING GUEST[1]

What delightful hosts are they—
  Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
  This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
  Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight
  And all gratitude, I stay
  Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good night."

EUGENE FIELD

Although Eugene Field was born September 2, 1850, in St. Louis, Missouri, his work belongs to the literature of the West. Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region claimed him as their own and Field never repudiated the allegiance; he even called most of his poetry "Western Verse."

Field's area of education embraced New England, Missouri and what European territory he could cover in six months. At twenty-three he became a reporter on the St. Louis *Evening Journal*, the rest of his life being given, with a dogged devotion, to journalism. Driven by the demands of his unique daily columns (those on the Denver *Tribune* [1881-1883] and the Chicago *Daily News* [1883-1895] were widely copied), Field first capitalized and then standardized his high spirits, his erudition, his whimsicality, his fondness for children. He wrote so often with his tongue in his cheek

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the *Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley*. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

that it is difficult to say where true sentiment stops and where exaggerated sentimentality begins. "Field," says Fred Lewis Pattee, in his detailed study of *American Literature Since 1870*, "more than any other writer of the period, illustrates the way the old type of literary scholar was to be modified and changed by the newspaper. Every scrap of Field's voluminous product was written for immediate newspaper consumption. . . . He was a pioneer in a peculiar province: he stands for the journalization of literature, a process that, if carried to its logical extreme, will make of the man of letters a mere newspaper reporter."

Though Field was overrated, some of his child lyrics, his homely philosophic ballads (in the vein which Harte and Riley popularized) and his burlesques won him, for the time, a conspicuous place. Readers of all tastes found much to delight them in *A Little Book of Western Verse* (1889), *With Trumpet and Drum* (1892), *A Second Book of Verse* (1893) and those remarkable versions (and perversions) of Horace, *Echoes from the Sabine Farm* (1893), written in collaboration with his equally adroit though practically unknown brother, Roswell M. Field. A complete one-volume edition of his verse was issued in 1910.

Field died in Chicago, Illinois, November 4, 1895.

OUR TWO OPINIONS[1]

Us two wuz boys when we fell out,—
  Nigh to the age uv my youngest now;
Don't rec'lect what 'twuz about,
  Some small deeff'rence, I'll allow.
Lived next neighbors twenty years,
  A-hatin' each other, me 'nd Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,
  'Nd *I* havin' my opinyin uv *him*.

Grew up together 'nd wouldn't speak,
  Courted sisters, 'nd marr'd 'em, too;
'Tended same meetin'-house oncet a week,
  A-hatin' each other through 'nd through!
But when Abe Linkern asked the West
  F'r soldiers, we answered,—me 'nd Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,
  'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

[1] All of Field's verses are reprinted from *The Complete Works of Eugene Field* by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, holders of the copyright.

But down in Tennessee one night
Ther' wuz sound uv firin' fur away,
'Nd the sergeant allowed ther'd be a fight
With the Johnnie Rebs some time nex' day;
'Nd as I wuz thinkin' uv Lizzie 'nd home
Jim stood afore me, long 'nd slim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

Seemed like we knew there wuz goin' to be
Serious trouble f'r me 'nd him;
Us two shuck hands, did Jim 'nd me,
But never a word from me or Jim!
He went *his* way 'nd *I* went *mine*,
'Nd into the battle's roar went we,—
I havin' *my* opinyin uv *Jim*,
'Nd *he* havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*.

Jim never came back from the war again,
But I hain't forgot that last, last night
When, waitin' f'r orders, us two men
Made up 'nd shuck hands, afore the fight.
'Nd after it all, it's soothin' to know
That here I be 'nd younder's Jim,—
He havin' *his* opinyin uv *me*,
'Nd *I* havin' *my* opinyin uv *him*.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
The little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket molds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;

And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Aye, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

SEEIN' THINGS

I ain't afraid uv snakes or toads, or bugs or worms or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!
I'm pretty brave I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an' when my prayers are said,
Mother tells me "Happy Dreams" an' takes away the light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're walkin' round
So softly and so creepy-like they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times they're white—
But color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me—*so!*
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered 'at time I never slep' a mite—
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath.

An' I am, oh *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!

An' so when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an' nice,
I want to—but I do not pass my plate f'r them things twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

ROSWELL MARTIN FIELD

Roswell Martin Field was born in St. Louis, Missouri, September 1, 1851, a year but a day after his famous brother. His mother died when he was still young and a cousin (Mary French) brought up the two boys in Amherst, Massachusetts. Roswell Field was graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and attended Harvard for one year. Thereafter, his career paralleled Eugene's; he became a journalist, column conductor, bibliophile, founding the "Dofobs" ("Darned-old-fools-over-books"). His column, "Lights and Shadows," on the *Chicago Evening Post* ran for over fourteen years; he was by turns, music and dramatic critic, as well as an accomplished pianist. His principles were such that Eugene's lax habits threw "Rose" to quite the reverse. He died in Morristown, New Jersey, January 10, 1919.

Roswell Field was the author of several volumes, none of which attained the popularity of *Echoes from the Sabine Farm* (1892) written in collaboration with his brother. Usually considered Eugene Field's best performance, most readers have forgotten (if they ever realized) that the more delightful and far more dexterous of these paraphrases from Horace were signed "R. M. F." Overshadowed by his more dazzling and prolific brother, Roswell Martin Field was by no means the less gifted of the two.

TO HIS BOOK

(*Horace—Epistle XX*)

You vain, self-conscious little book,
Companion of my happy days,
How eagerly you seem to look
For wider fields to spread your lays;

My desk and locks cannot contain you,
Nor blush of modesty restrain you.

Well, then, begone, fool that thou art!
But do not come to me and cry,
When critics strike you to the heart:
"Oh, wretched little book am I!"
You know I tried to educate you
To shun the fate that must await you.

In youth you may encounter friends
(Pray this prediction be not wrong),
But wait until old age descends
And thumbs have smeared your gentlest song;
Then will the moths connive to eat you
And rural libraries secrete you.

However, should a friend some word
Of my obscure career request,
Tell him how deeply I was stirred
To spread my wings beyond the nest;
Take from my years, which are before you,
To boom my merits, I implore you.

Tell him that I am short and fat,
Quick in my temper, soon appeased,
With locks of gray—but what of that?—
Loving the sun, with nature pleased.
I'm more than four and forty, hark you;
But ready for a night off, mark you!

A COUNTERBLAST AGAINST GARLIC

(*Horace—Epode III*)

May the man who has cruelly murdered his sire—
A crime to be punished with death—
Be condemned to eat garlic till he shall expire
Of his own foul and venomous breath!
What stomachs these rustics must have who can eat
This dish that Canidia made,
Which imparts to my colon a torturous heat,
And a poisonous look, I'm afraid!

They say that ere Jason attempted to yoke
The fire-breathing bulls to the plow
He smeared his whole body with garlic, a joke
Which I fully appreciate now.
When Medea gave Glauce her beautiful dress,
In which garlic was scattered about,
It was cruel and rather low-down, I confess,
But it settled the point beyond doubt.

On thirsty Apulia ne'er has the sun
Inflicted such terrible heat;
As for Hercules' robe, although poisoned, 'twas fun
When compared with this garlic we eat!
Maecenas, if ever on garbage like this
You express a desire to be fed,
May Mrs. Maecenas object to your kiss,
And lie at the foot of the bed!

EDWIN MARKHAM

Edwin Markham was born in Oregon City, Oregon, April 23, 1852, the youngest son of pioneer parents. His father died before he reached his fifth year and in 1857 he was taken by his mother to a wild valley in the Suisun Hills in central California. Here he grew to young manhood; farming, broncho-riding, laboring on a cattle ranch, educating himself in the primitive country schools. At eighteen he determined to be a teacher and entered the State Normal School at San José.

Since childhood, Markham had been writing verses of no extraordinary merit, one of his earliest pieces being a typically Byronic echo (*A Dream of Chaos*) full of the high-sounding fustian of the period. Several years before he uttered his famous challenge, Markham was writing poems of protest, insurrectionary in theme but conventional in effect. Suddenly, in 1899, a sense of outrage at the inequality of human struggle voiced itself in the sonorous poem, "The Man with the Hoe." (See Preface.) Inspired by Millet's painting, Markham made the bowed, broken French peasant a symbol of the poverty-stricken toiler in all lands—his was a protest not against toil but the drudgery, the exploitation of labor. "The Yeoman is the landed and well-to-do farmer," says Markham, "you need shed no tears for him. But here in the Millet picture is his opposite—the Hoeman; the landless, the soul-blighted workman of the world."

The success of the poem upon its appearance in the San Francisco *Examiner* (January 15, 1899) was instantaneous. The lines appeared in every part of the globe; they were quoted and copied in every walk of life, in the literary and the labor world. The same year of its publication, it was incorporated in Markham's first volume, *The Man with the Hoe and Other Poems* (1899). Two years later, his almost equally well known poem was published. The same passion that fired Markham to champion the great common workers equipped him to write of the great Commoner in *Lincoln, and Other Poems* (1901). His later volumes are a descent, melodious but scarcely remarkable. They have the rhetoric without the resonance of the forerunners. Never reaching the heights, there are, nevertheless, moments of dignity in *The Shoes of Happiness* (1914) and *The Gates of Paradise* (1920).

Markham came East in 1901, where he has lived ever since, making his home on Staten Island, New York, compiling and lecturing.

OUTWITTED

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!

THE MAN WITH THE HOE[1]

(Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting)

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?

[1] Revised version, 1920. Copyright by Edwin Markham.

Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned, and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

PREPAREDNESS

For all your days prepare,
And meet them ever alike:
When you are the anvil, bear—
When you are the hammer, strike.

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE[1]

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal veil.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,

[1] See pages 163, 189, 333, 334, 349, 354, 467.

He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart.
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

CHARLES E. S. WOOD

Charles Erskine Scott Wood was born at Erie, Pennsylvania, February 20, 1852, educated at the United States Military Academy (1874) and Columbia, where he received the degrees of Ph.B. and LL.B. in 1883. Wood served in the United States Army for almost ten years, acting as lieutenant in various campaigns against the Indians during 1877-8. He was admitted to the bar in 1884, practiced at Portland, Oregon, and retired in 1919.

In 1901 he published *A Book of Tales, Being Myths of the North American Indians.* In 1904, his symbolic *A Masque of Love* appeared. His finest work, however, was *The Poet in the Desert*

(1915), a pageant of protest from which the first two quoted excerpts are taken. The volume itself is one long poem, a rhapsodic dialogue between Truth and a poet. The central theme might be termed the manhood of humanity, and about this leading *motif* Wood has woven a set of graphic variations. A disgust of tyranny, a challenge to injustice, a celebration of bastards—these may be the motive power prompting the poet; what results, however, has not merely the ring of passion but is a controlled assembling of sharply drawn pictures.

In 1918 a limited number of privately printed copies of *Maia* appeared. *Maia* is a sonnet sequence of the seasons with numerous interjections by the author and a few interpolations by Sara Bard Field, to whom is credited the form of the volume. *Heavenly Discourses,* which had originally appeared in *The Masses,* caused more discussion upon republication in 1927, Wood being compared to Voltaire, Paine and Mark Twain. *The Poet in the Desert* was reissued in a popular form in 1928.

SUNRISE

(*From "The Poet in the Desert"*)

The lean coyote, prowler of the night,
Slips to his rocky fastnesses.
Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,
And, from the castellated cliffs,
Rock-ravens launch their proud black sails upon the day.
The wild horses troop back to their pastures.
The poplar-trees watch beside the irrigation-ditches.
Orioles, whose nests sway in the cotton-wood trees by the ditch-side, begin to twitter.
All shy things, breathless, watch
The thin white skirts of dawn,
The dancer of the sky,
Who trips daintily down the mountain-side
Emptying her crystal chalice. . . .
And a red-bird, dipped in sunrise, cracks from a poplar's top
His exultant whip above a silver world.

THE DESERT

She is a nun, withdrawing behind her veil;
Gray, mysterious, meditative, unapproachable.

Her body is tawny with the eagerness of the Sun
And her eyes are pools which shine in deep canyons.
She is a beautiful swart woman
With opals at her throat,
Rubies at her wrists
And topaz about her ankles.
Her breasts are like the evening and the day stars.

She sits upon her throne of light, proud and silent,
Indifferent to wooers.
The Sun is her servitor, the stars her attendants,
Running before her.
She sings a song unto her own ears,
Solitary but sufficient:
The song of her being.
She is a naked dancer, dancing upon
A pavement of porphyry and pearl,
Dazzling, so that the eyes must be shaded.
She wears the stars upon her bosom
And braids her hair with the constellations.

FIRST SNOW

The cows are bawling in the mountains.
The snowflakes fall.
They are leaving the pools and pebbled fountains;
Troubled, they bawl.
They are winding down the mountain's shoulders
Through the open pines,
Through wild rose thickets and the granite bowlders
In broken lines.
Each calf trots close beside its mother
And so they go,
Bawling and calling to one another
About the snow.

IRWIN RUSSELL

Irwin Russell was born June 3, 1853, at Port Gibson, Mississippi, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. His restless nature and wayward disposition drove him from one place to another, from dissipation to dissipation, from not too rugged health

to utter breakdown. In July, 1879, he was forced to leave New York, working his way down to New Orleans on a coast steamer, trying to rehabilitate himself as reporter on the New Orleans *Picayune*. But illness pursued him and the following December Russell died, cut off, in the midst of his promise, before he had reached his twenty-seventh year.

Although Russell did not take his poetry seriously and though the bulk of it is small, its influence has been large. Thomas Nelson Page and Joel Chandler Harris have acknowledged their indebtedness to him; the creator of Uncle Remus writing, "Irwin Russell was among the first—if not the very first—of Southern writers to appreciate the literary possibilities of the negro character." He entered the negroes' life, appreciated their turns of thought, saw things with that peculiar mixture of reverence and unconscious humor that is so integral a part of the Spirituals. "Blessing the Dance" and "De Fust Banjo" (from Russell's operetta *Christmas-Night in the Quarters*) are excellent examples; faithful renderings of the mind of the old-fashioned, simple and sententious child of the plantation.

A collection of Russell's poems appeared, with an introduction by Joel Chandler Harris, in 1888. In 1917, a more inclusive volume, with illustrations by E. W. Kemble, was published by The Century Company.

Russell died suddenly, in an obscure boarding house in New Orleans, December 23, 1879.

BLESSING THE DANCE

(*From "Christmas-Night in the Quarters"*)

O Mahsr! let dis gath'rin fin' a blessin' in yo' sight!
Don't jedge us hard fur what we does—yo' know it's Chrismus-night;
An' all de balunce ob de yeah we does as right's we kin.
Ef dancin's wrong, O Mahsr! let de time excuse de sin!

We labors in de vin'ya'd, wukin' hard an' wukin' true;
Now, shorely yo' won't notus, ef we eats a grape or two,
An' takes a leetle holiday,—a leetle restin'-spell,—
Bekase, nex' week, we'll start in fresh, an' labor twicet as well.

Remember, Mahsr,—min' dis now,—de sinfulness ob sin
Is 'pendin' 'pon de sperrit what we goes an' does it in;
An' in a righchis frame ob min' we's gwine to dance an' sing,
A-feelin' like King David, when he cut de pigeon-wing.

It seems to me—indeed it do—I mebbe mout be wrong—
Dat people raly *ought* to dance, when Chrismus comes along;
Des dance bekase dey's happy—like de birds hops in de trees,
De pine-top fiddle soundin' to de bowin' ob de breeze.

We has no ark to dance afore, like Isrul's prophet king;
We has no harp to soun' de chords, to holp us out to sing;
But 'cordin' to de gif's we has we does de bes' we knows,
An' folks don't 'spise de vi'let-flower bekase it ain't de rose.

Yes, bless us, please, Sah, eben ef we's doin' wrong tonight;
Kase den we'll need de blessin' more'n ef we's doin' right;
An' let de blessin's stay wid us, untel we comes to die,
An' goes to keep our Chrismus wid dem sheriffs in de sky!

Yes, tell dem preshis anguls we's a-gwine to jine 'em soon:
Our voices we's a-trainin' fur to sing de glory tune;
We's ready when you wants us, an' it ain't no matter when.
O Mahsr! call yo' chillen soon, an' take 'em home! *Amen.*

DE FUST BANJO

Go 'way, fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin'.
Keep silence fur yo' betters! don't you heah de banjo talkin'?
About de 'possum's tail she's gwine to lecter—ladies, listen!
About de ha'r whut isn't dar, an' why de ha'r is missin':

"Dar's gwine to be a' oberflow," said Noah, lookin' solemn—
Fur Noah tuk de *Herald,* an' he read de ribber column—
An' so he sot his hands to wuk a-clarin' timber-patches,
An' 'lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat de steamah *Natchez.*

Ol' Noah kep' a-nailin' an' a-chippin' an' a-sawin';
An' all de wicked neighbors kep' a-laughin' an' a-pshawin';
But Noah didn't min' 'em, knowin' whut wuz gwine to happen:
An' forty days an' forty nights de rain it kep' a-drappin'.

Now, Noah had done cotched a lot ob ebry sort o' beas'es—
Ob all de shows a-trabbelin', it beat 'em all to pieces!
He had a Morgan colt an' sebral head o' Jarsey cattle—
An' druv 'em 'board de Ark as soon's he heered de thunder rattle.

Den sech anoder fall ob rain! It come so awful hebby,
De ribber riz immejitly, an' busted troo de lebbee;
De people all wuz drownded out—'cep' Noah an' de critters,
An' men he'd hired to wuk de boat—an' one to mix de bitters.

De Ark she kep' a-sailin' an' a-sailin' *an'* a-sailin';
De lion got his dander up, an' like to bruk de palin';
De sarpints hissed; de painters yelled; tel', whut wid all de fussin',
You c'u'dn't hardly heah de mate a-bossin' 'roun' an' cussin'.

Now Ham, de only nigger whut wuz runnin' on de packet,
Got lonesome in de barber-shop, an' c'u'dn't stan' de racket;
An' so, fur to amuse he-se'f, he steamed some wood an' bent it,
An' soon he had a banjo made—de fust dat wuz invented.

He wet de ledder, stretched it on; made bridge an' screws an' aprin;
An' fitted in a proper neck—'twuz berry long an' taperin';
He tuk some tin, an' twisted him a thimble fur to ring it:
An' den de mighty question riz: how wuz he gwine to string it?

De 'possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I's a-singin';
De ha'r's so long an' thick an' strong,—des fit fur banjo-stringin';
Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as washday-dinner graces:
An' sorted ob 'em by de size—f'om little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig,—'twuz "*Nebber min' de wedder,*"—
She soun' like forty-lebben bands a-playin' all togedder:
Some went to pattin'; some to dancin': Noah called de figgers;
An' Ham he sot an' knocked de tune, de happiest ob niggers!

Now, sence dat time—it's mighty strange—dere's not de slightes' showin'
Ob any ha'r at all upon de 'possum's tail a-growin';
An' curyus, too, dat nigger's ways: his people nebber los' 'em—
Fur whar you finds de nigger—dar's de banjo an' de 'possum!

Edith Matilda Thomas was born at Chatham, Ohio, August 12, 1854. She was educated in the Normal Institute at Geneva, Ohio, engaged in much editorial work, living in New York from 1888 until her death in 1925.

Miss Thomas was the author of some dozen books of verse, most of them lightly lyrical in mood, although a few of her individual poems have a more dramatic quality. The best of her work may be found in *Lyrics and Sonnets* (1887), *The Inverted Torch* (1890) and *The Flower from the Ashes* (1915).

"FROST TONIGHT"

Apple-green west and an orange bar;
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star . . .
And, "Child, take the shears and cut what you will,
Frost tonight—so clear and dead-still."

Then I sally forth, half sad, half proud,
And I come to the velvet, imperial crowd,
The wine-red, the gold, the crimson, the pied,—
The dahlias that reign by the garden-side.

The dahlias I might not touch till tonight!
A gleam of shears in the fading light,
And I gathered them all,—the splendid throng,
And in one great sheaf I bore them along.

. . . . . .

In my garden of Life with its all late flowers
I heed a Voice in the shrinking hours:
"Frost tonight—so clear and dead-still" . . .
Half sad, half proud, my arms I fill.

H. C. BUNNER

Henry Cuyler Bunner was born at Oswego, New York, August 3, 1855. At twenty-two he was appointed editor of *Puck* (then the most prominent of comic weeklies), a position which he held until his death. For more than ten years he wrote almost all the rhymed contributions to that journal—to say nothing of quantities of short stories (his *Short Sixes*, first published in 1890, are still well

known), prose paragraphs, topical parodies, editorials, etc. Like Field, the artist was finally buried in the journalist; but, unlike Field, Bunner kept the work of the serious poet separate from that of the manufacturer of satiric trifles. Yet, in spite of certain detached fragments in *Airs from Arcady* (1884) and *Rowen: Second Crop Songs* (1892), Bunner is likely to be remembered chiefly for his flippant *vers de société*, his skillful and gravely mocking absurdities.

"Behold the Deeds!" is a splendid example of Bunner's wit and technical ingenuity. It is a burlesque of the old ballads in the guise of a Chant-Royal, one of the strictest and most difficult of the French forms. Bunner's was, at best, an artificial world, a world of graceful compliments, polite evasions, rhymed *billets doux*, with light sighs and lighter laughter tinkling among the teacups. Even so pathetic a subject as "A Pitcher of Mignonette" is framed in the tight borders of a triolet. Lacking Austin Dobson's exquisiteness and *savoir faire*, he was not without the Englishman's neatness of touch.

Bunner died, in New Jersey, in 1896; a collection of his poems, edited by Brander Matthews, appearing in the same year.

BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

(Being the Plaint of Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, Salesman of Fancy Notions, held in durance of his Landlady for a "failure to connect" on Saturday night)

I would that all men my hard case would know,
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, for lo!
I of my landlady am lockèd in
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay:
She turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing (as prisoners to their dungeon-stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I, when the morrow doth begin,
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin

For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,
Led by the daughter of my landlady
  Piano-ward. This day, for all my moans,
Dry-bread and water have been servèd me.
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
  The heart of the young he-boarder doth win,
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer" *adagio*—
  That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the "bunko skin"
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye
Ere sits she with a lover, as did we
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
  That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday's shortness of trade dollars three?
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Yea! She forgets the arm that was wont to go
  Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of her young man's elbow.
  I forget not, for I that youth have been!
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
Close in his room. Not calm as I was he;
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.
  Small ease he got of playing on the bones
Or hammering on the stope-pipe, that I see.
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
  I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!
Thee will I show up—yea, up I will show
  Thy too-thick buckwheats and thy tea too thin.
Aye! here I dare thee, ready for the fray:
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house" I say!
It does not with the advertisements agree.

Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Envoy

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
Privily by the window. Hence these groans.
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit.*
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE

A pitcher of mignonette
In a tenement's highest casement,—
Queer sort of flower-pot—yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
To the little sick child in the basement—
The pitcher of mignonette,
In a tenement's highest casement.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

Lizette Woodworth Reese was born January 9, 1856, in Waverly, Baltimore County, Maryland, of mixed English and German stock. After receiving an education chiefly in private schools she taught English at the Western High School in Baltimore, where she lived. After many years of service, she retired in 1921. In 1923, the alumni of the High School where she had taught for a score of years, together with the teachers and pupils, presented the school with a bronze tablet inscribed with her poem, "Tears," one of the most famous sonnets written by an American.

At first glance, Miss Reese's work seems merely a continuation of the traditional strain; in fact, some of her critics decried her poetry as being English rather than American. But it was natural that her verse should sound a note which has been the dominant one in English pastoral poetry from Wordsworth to Housman. Nor was Miss Reese's inheritance alone responsible for this. The country around Baltimore, every tree and path of which Miss Reese knew so intimately, was settled by the English and had the

very shape and color of counties like Sussex and Buckinghamshire.

Miss Reese's first book, *A Branch of May* (1887), had an undercurrent of intensity beneath its quiet contours. Few of its readers in the Nineties would have dreamed that this straightforward undidactic speech would pave the way for the direct songs of Sara Teasdale and Edna St. Vincent Millay. In a period of sugared sentiment and lace valentine lyrics, Miss Reese's crisp lines were an entire generation ahead of the times and were consequently appreciated only for their pictorial felicities. *A Handful of Lavender* (1891), *A Quiet Road* (1896), and *A Wayside Lute* (1909), established an artistry which, for all its seemingly old-fashioned elegance, is as spontaneous as it is skillful. Here are no verbal tricks, no false postures; here is a simple record which is, somehow, never banal. "This poetry of hers," writes Mary Colum, "will persist, not because the author was cleverer or more original than other writers, but because in some way her nerves were more subtle in response to the kinds of life and experiences that came her way."

From 1909 to 1920 there was a silence. During these ten years, Miss Reese wrote little, and published less. Suddenly her work appeared again, keener and more concise than ever. *Spicewood* was published in 1920; *Wild Cherry* in 1923; a generous *Selected Poems* in 1926; *Little Henrietta* in 1927, the poet's seventieth year: *A Victorian Village*, her reminiscences of a changing world, in 1929. In all these volumes, as well as the still more recent, and as yet uncollected, poetry (four examples of which are included in the following group), one finds the same things which have always held Miss Reese. Again and again she writes of lilacs in Old York Lane, of thorn trees and blackberry rain, of Judas-blossoms and daffodils, of spring ecstasy and lost love, of a dead lady in her garden and Mary at the manger. But there is always something personal, always something which makes the very repetitions take on a light which is fresh and clear. At least a dozen of her brief songs and lyrical sonnets have found a niche in American literature. Hers is a singing that is not dependent on a fashion.

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears:
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

SPICEWOOD

The spicewood burns along the gray, spent sky,
In moist unchimneyed places, in a wind,
That whips it all before, and all behind,
Into one thick, rude flame, now low, now high.
It is the first, the homeliest thing of all—
At sight of it, that lad that by it fares,
Whistles afresh his foolish, town-caught airs—
A thing so honey-colored and so tall!

It is as though the young Year, ere he pass
To the white riot of the cherry tree,
Would fain accustom us, or here, or there,
To his new sudden ways with bough and grass,
So starts with what is humble, plain to see,
And all familiar as a cup, a chair.

SPRING ECSTASY

Oh, let me run and hide,
  Let me run straight to God;
The weather is so mad with white
  From sky down to the clod!

If but one thing were so,
  Lilac, or thorn out there,
It would not be, indeed,
  So hard to bear.

The weather has gone mad with white;
  The cloud, the highway touch.
White lilac is enough;
  White thorn too much!

OWNERSHIP

Love not a loveliness too much,
For it may turn and clutch you so,
That you be less than any serf,
And at its nodding go.

Be master; otherwise you grow
Too small, too humble, like to one
Long dispossessed, who stares through tears
At his lost house across the sun.

Wild carrot in an old field here,
Or steeple choked with music there,
Possess, as part of what is yours;
Thus prove yourself the heir.

Your barony is sky and land,
From morning's start to the night's close;
Bend to your need Orion's hounds,
Or the small fagot of a rose.

A PURITAN LADY

Wild Carthage held her, Rome,
  Sidon. She stared to tears
Tall, golden Helen, wearying
  Behind the Trojan spears.

Towered Antwerp knew her well;
  She wore her quiet gown
In some hushed house in Oxford grass,
  Or lane in Salem town.

Humble and high in one,
  Cool, certain, different,
She lasts; scarce saint, yet half a child,
  As hard, as innocent.

What grave, long afternoons,
  What caged airs round her blown,
Stripped her of humor, left her bare
  As cloud, or wayside stone?

Made her as clear a thing,
In this slack world as plain
As a white flower on a grave,
Or sleet sharp at a pane?

A FLOWER OF MULLEIN

I am too near, too clear a thing for you,
A flower of mullein in a crack of wall,
The villagers half-see, or not at all;
Part of the weather, like the wind or dew.
You love to pluck the different, and find
Stuff for your joy in cloudy loveliness;
You love to fumble at a door, and guess
At some strange happening that may wait behind.
Yet life is full of tricks, and it is plain,
That men drift back to some worn field or roof,
To grip at comfort in a room, a stair;
To warm themselves at some flower down a lane:
You, too, may long, grown tired of the aloof,
For the sweet surety of the common air.

WILD CHERRY

Why make your lodging here in this spent lane,
Where but an old man, with his sheep each day,
Twice through the forgotten grass goes by your way,
Half sees you there, and not once looks again?
For you are of the very ribs of spring,
And should have many lovers, who have none.
In silver cloaks, in hushed troops down the sun
Should they draw near, oh, strange and lovely thing!
Beauty has no set weather, no sure place;
Her careful pageantries are here as there,
With nothing lost. And soon, some lad may start—
A strayed Mayer in this unremembered space—
At your tall white, and know you very fair,
Let all else go to roof within your heart.

OLD SAUL

I cannot think of any word
To make it plain to you,
How white a thing the hawthorn bush
That delicately blew

Within a crook of Tinges Lane;
Each May Day there it stood;
And lit a flame of loveliness
For the small neighborhood.

So fragile-white a thing it was,
I cannot make it plain.
Or the sweet fumbling of the bees,
Like the break in a rain.

Old Saul lived near. And this his life:—
To cobble for his bread;
To mourn a tall son lost at sea;
A daughter worse than dead.

And so, in place of all his lack,
He set the hawthorn-tree;
Made it his wealth, his mirth, his god,
His Zion to touch and see.

Born English he. Down Tinges Lane
His lad's years came and went,
He saw out there behind his thorn,
A hundred thorns of Kent.

At lovers slipping through the dusk,
He shook a lover's head;
Grudged them each flower. It was too white
For any but the dead.

Once on a blurred, wet, silver day,
He said to two or three:
"Folks, when I go, pluck yonder bloom,
That I may take with me."

But it was winter when he went,
The road wind-wrenched and torn;
They laid upon his coffin lid
A wreath made all of thorn.

WOMEN

Some women herd such little things—a box
Oval and glossy, in its gilt and red,
Or squares of satin, or a high, dark bed—
But when love comes, they drive to it all their flocks;
Yield up their crooks; take little; gain for fold
And pasture each a small, forgotten grave.
When they are gone, then lesser women crave
And squander their sad hoards; their shepherds' gold.
Some gather life like faggots in a wood,
And crouch its blaze, without a thought at all
Past warming their pinched selves to the last spark.
And women as a whole are swift and good,
In humor scarce, their measure being small;
They plunge and leap, yet somehow miss the dark.

SURETY

How do I know that you will come again?
I judge you by imperishable things
Like crab-trees rosy as the cloaks of kings,
That twice a year blow down the same tall lane.
I dare the silence in the house, each place
Without you, as a stalk of leaf, the wrong
The neighbors do you in their talk, the song
Beaten out of bells, and dusk, and a great space.
Nothing can tear the spring from out the year,
Or love from out the heart. Both hands have I
Filled with crab-bloom November as in May.
Is bloom to bough than you to me more dear?
Has the old trick of flowering been put by?
You will come back, you will come back and stay.

CROWS

Earth is raw with this one note,
  This tattered making of a song,
Narrowed down to a crow's throat,
  Above the willow-trees that throng

The crooking field from end to end.
  Fixed as the sun, the grave, this sound;
Of what the weather has to spend
  As much a part as sky or ground.

The primal yellow of that flower,
  The tansy making August plain;
And the stored wildness of this hour
  It sucks up like a bitter rain.

Miss it we would, were it not here,
  Simple as water, rough as spring,
It hurls us at the point of spear,
  Back to some naked, early thing.

Listen now. As with a hoof
  It stamps an image on the gust;
Chimney by chimney a lost roof
  Starts for a moment from its dust.

HORACE TRAUBEL

Horace Traubel, often referred to as "Whitman's Boswell," was born in Camden, New Jersey, December 19, 1858, of mixed Jewish and Christian parentage. His scholastic education was desultory; after leaving school he sold newspapers, worked as an errand boy and helped his father in a stationery store. Later he became a printer's devil, proof-reader, reporter and editorial writer. In 1873 Walt Whitman came to Camden, little dreaming he would spend the remainder of his life there. He was almost friendless, a sick man, and alone. The Traubel household welcomed him in and an extraordinary friendship sprang up between the aging poet and the young boy. Traubel saw Whitman some part of each day for almost twenty years. "As the years fled," says David Karsner in his *Life of Horace Traubel*, "he catered to Whitman's needs in a hundred

different ways. He would bring Old Walt such papers and magazines as he knew would interest him. He ran his errands . . . and assumed the details and responsibilities connected with the publishing of the later editions of Whitman's books." This intimacy is fully recorded in Traubel's chief work, a series of volumes, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, a compilation which has been called "Whitman's unconscious autobiography."

It is inevitable that Traubel's own poetry should betray the strong influence of his hero. Yet in several poems in *Optimos* (1910) and *Chants Communal* (1914) Traubel achieves a personal idiom; beneath the wearying length and repetitive phrases, he communicates the fervor of the insurgent who wrote, "I build no fires to burn anybody up. I only build fires to light up the way."

Traubel died at Bon Echo, Ontario, Canada, where he had gone for his health, September 8, 1919.

HOW ARE YOU, DEAR WORLD, THIS MORNING?

How are you, dear world, this morning?
Clean from my bath of sleep,
Warm from the bosom of my mother star,
Recharged with the energy of my father self,
Restored from all derelict hours to the lawful service of time,
I come without gift or doctrine or tethering humor
To entertain your fateful will.

Do the things that were stolen remain stolen?
Do the lives that were destroyed remain dead?
Do the stragglers who failed still fail?
Does the sleeper who slept the sleep of the merchant awake only to the merchant?
Does the law that was yesterday at my throat awake only to the law?
Does the singer awake only to sing, the artist to paint, and the orator to talk?
Or does the merchant awake to the man?
Or does the law of the state awake to the law of the heart?
Or do stolen things shift back into right relations?
Or is the singer silent, or does the artist put aside his paints, or has the orator stopt talking, because something greater than song or art or eloquence has appeared in the face of the multitude?

How are you, dear world, this morning?
We have had confidences other days but somehow the confidences of this day are sweetest of all.
They find me where I am remote, they seek me out where I am reluctant, they confirm me where I am weak,
They melt me down from flaw and angle into purity and circle,
They interpret me to last night's strangers and they introduce me to the real meanings of my vagrant past,
They remove me from my quarrels and they deliver me to truce and peace;
For now I see that when of old I thought of justice and believed I was dreaming that only then was I awake,
For now I see that the wrongdoer is the first to withdraw wrong and is the only one who can withdraw it,
For now I see that all the effort I spent trying to discover why lives were beautiful or ugly has shown me that all ugliness and all beauty finally must lapse in one transfiguration,
For now in the confidences of this morning, in the rapture of this awakening, I find my illimitable roots trailed backward and forward and round into all time and all men,
Pledging my love to countless surrenders and repeals.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

Frank Dempster Sherman was born at Peekskill, New York, May 6, 1860. He entered Columbia University in 1879, where, after graduation and a subsequent instructorship, he was made adjunct professor in 1891 and Professor of Graphics in 1904. He held the latter position until his death, which occurred September 19, 1916.

Besides being a writer of airy lyrics and epigrammatic quatrains, Sherman was an enthusiastic genealogist and a designer (especially of book-plates) of no little skill. As a poet, his gift was essentially that of a writer of light verse—fragrant, fragile, yet seldom too sentimental. Pleasant is the word for it, a pleasantness perfumed with wit.

Sherman never wearied of the little lyric; even the titles of his volumes are instances of his penchant for the brief snatch of song: *Madrigals and Catches* (1887), *Lyrics for a Lute* (1890), *Little-Folk Lyrics* (1892), *Lyrics of Joy* (1904). A sumptuous collected edition of his poems was published, with an Introduction by Clinton Scollard, in 1917.

AT MIDNIGHT

See, yonder, the belfry tower
  That gleams in the moon's pale light—
Or is it a ghostly flower
  That dreams in the silent night?

I listen and hear the chime
  Go quavering over the town,
And out of this flower of Time
  Twelve petals are wafted down.

BACCHUS

Listen to the tawny thief,
Hid beneath the waxen leaf,
Growling at his fairy host,
Bidding her with angry boast
Fill his cup with wine distilled
From the dew the dawn has spilled:
Stored away in golden casks
Is the precious draught he asks.

Who,—who makes this mimic din
In this mimic meadow inn,
Sings in such a drowsy note,
Wears a golden-belted coat;
Loiters in the dainty room
Of this tavern of perfume;
Dares to linger at the cup
Till the yellow sun is up?

Bacchus 'tis, come back again
To the busy haunts of men;
Garlanded and gayly dressed,
Bands of gold about his breast;
Straying from his paradise,
Having pinions angel-wise,—
'Tis the honey-bee, who goes
Reveling within a rose!

TWO QUATRAINS

IVY

Upon the walls the graceful Ivy climbs
And wraps with green the ancient ruin gray:
Romance it is, and these her leafy rhymes
Writ on the granite page of yesterday.

DAWN

Out of the scabbard of the night
By God's hand drawn,
Flashes his shining sword of light,
And lo—the dawn!

CHARLOTTE P. S. GILMAN

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman was born at Hartford, Connecticut, July 3, 1860. She began public work in 1890, lecturing on ethics, economics and sociology, identifying herself with the labor question and the advance of women.

She has written about a dozen books, her best works being *Woman and Economics* (1898) and *Human Work* (1904). Her volume of verse, *In This Our World* (1898), hurls many a shaft of ironic wit. Beneath the whimsical humor of "A Conservative" and the better known "Similar Cases" (unfortunately too long to quote) there is a sub-acid satire not easily forgotten.

A CONSERVATIVE

The garden beds I wandered by
One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly,
A-sitting on a thorn,
A black and crimson butterfly
All doleful and forlorn.

I thought that life could have no sting
To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
With wonder and surprise.
While sadly with his waving wing
He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
And flowers in goodly store,"—
But he only turned away from me
And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur—a joy to view—
Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
Those wings are made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"
And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack,
Today of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black;
The last I saw was this,—
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

Louise Imogen Guiney was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1861. Although she attended Elmhurst Academy in Providence, most of her studying was with private tutors. In 1901 she went to England, where she lived until her death.

Traditional in form and feeling, Miss Guiney's work has a distinctly personal vigor; even her earliest collections, *Songs at the Start* (1884) and *The White Sail and Other Poems* (1887), are not without individuality. Her two most characteristic volumes are *A Roadside Harp* (1893) and *Patrins* (1897). *Happy Ending* appeared in 1909, and was reissued with additional poems in 1927.

Though much of her work is poeticizing rather than poetry, there is no mistaking the high seriousness of her aim. Responding to the influence of the Cavalier poets whom she greatly admired, her best lines beat with a galloping courage. Aware of the poet's mission, she held her pen "in trust to Art, not serving shame or lust"; a militant faith was the very keynote of her writing. Contemporary life affected her but little; even her peasant songs ("In Leinster" for example) have a remoteness which escapes the impact of the present. Still, she was not a literary escapist; a mystic with vitality, her fiber was vigorous even when she was most spiritual. "The Kings" and "The Wild Ride" are assured of a place as long as American anthologies are made.

Miss Guiney died at Chipping-Campden, near Oxford, England, November 3, 1920.

THE KINGS

A man said unto his Angel:
"My spirits are fallen low,
And I cannot carry this battle:
O brother! where might I go?

"The terrible Kings are on me
With spears that are deadly bright;
Against me so from the cradle
Do fate and my fathers fight."

Then said to the man his Angel:
"Thou wavering, witless soul,
Back to the ranks! What matter
To win or lose the whole,

"As judged by the little judges
Who hearken not well, nor see?
Not thus, by the outer issue,
The Wise shall interpret thee.

"Thy will is the sovereign measure
And only event of things:
The puniest heart, defying,
Were stronger than all these Kings.

"Though out of the past they gather,
Mind's Doubt, and Bodily Pain,
And pallid Thirst of the Spirit
That is kin to the other twain.

"And Grief, in a cloud of banners,
And ringleted Vain Desires,
And Vice, with the spoils upon him
Of thee and thy beaten sires,—

"While Kings of eternal evil
Yet darken the hills about,
Thy part is with broken saber
To rise on the last redoubt;

"To fear not sensible failure,
Nor covet the game at all,
But fighting, fighting, fighting,
Die, driven against the wall!"

THE WILD RIDE

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! But alert to the saddle
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us;
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty;
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

BLISS CARMAN

(William) Bliss Carman was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, April 15, 1861, of a long line of United Empire Loyalists who withdrew from Connecticut at the time of the Revolutionary War. Carman was educated at the University of New Brunswick (1879-81), at Edinburgh (1882-3) and Harvard 1886-8). He took up his residence in the United States about 1889.

In 1893, Carman issued his first book, *Low Tide on Grand Pré: A Book of Lyrics.* From the outset, it was evident that Carman possessed lyrical power: the ability to fuse thought in emotion, to interpret the external world through personal intensity. A buoyancy, new to American literature, made his *camaraderie* with Nature frankly pagan as contrasted to the moralizing tributes of many of his predecessors. This freshness and whimsy made Carman the natural collaborator for Richard Hovey, and when their first joint *Songs from Vagabondia* appeared in 1894 Carman's fame was established. (See Preface.) Even so devout a poet as Francis Thompson was enthusiastic about the book's irresponsibility: "These snatches," wrote Thompson, "have the spirit of a gypsy Omar Khayyám. They have always careless verve and often careless felicity; they are masculine and rough as roving songs should be."

Although the three *Vagabondia* collections contain Carman's best known poems, several of his other volumes (he published over twenty of them) vibrate with the same pulse. A physical

gayety rises from *Ballads of Lost Haven* (1897), *From the Book of Myths* (1902) and *Songs of the Sea Children* (1904). Here are songs for the open road, the windy beach, the mountaintop.

Carman also wrote several volumes of essays and, in conjunction with Mary Perry King, devised poem-dances (*Daughters of Dawn*, 1913) suggesting Vachel Lindsay's later poem-games. Although the strength is diluted and the music thinned in the later collections, such as *April Airs* (1916) and *Wild Garden* (1929), some of the old magic persists; the spell is over-familiar but it is not quite powerless.

Carman died in June, 1929, at New Canaan, Connecticut, and was buried in his native province of New Brunswick.

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,
When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

THE GRAVEDIGGER

Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done.
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more:

But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

Oh, the ships of Greece and the ships of Tyre
Went out, and where are they?
In the port they made, they are delayed
With the ships of yesterday.

He followed the ships of England far,
As the ships of long ago;
And the ships of France they led him a dance,
But he laid them all arow.

Oh, a loafing, idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town;
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

But though he delves so fierce and grim,
His honest graves are wide,
As well they know who sleep below
The dredge of the deepest tide.

Oh, he works with a rollicking stave at lip,
And loud is the chorus skirled;
With the burly rote of his rumbling throat
He batters it down the world.

He learned it once in his father's house,
Where the ballads of eld were sung;
And merry enough is the burden rough,
But no man knows the tongue.

Oh, fair, they say, was his bride to see,
And willful she must have been,
That she could bide at his gruesome side
When the first red dawn came in.

And sweet, they say, is her kiss to those
She greets to his border home;
And softer than sleep her hand's first sweep
That beckons, and they come.

Oh, crooked is he, but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal barque to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was foggy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize today.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
"Such folly must surely fail!"
And when he was done, "Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?"

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

GEORGE SANTAYANA

George Santayana was born in Madrid, Spain, December 16, 1863, came to the United States at the age of nine, and was educated at Harvard, where later he became instructor of philosophy the same year he received his Ph.D. This was in 1889. From 1889 to 1912 he remained at Harvard, becoming not merely one of the most noted professors in the history of the University, but one of the most appreciated minds in America. In 1914, he went abroad and ever since then he has been living in France and England.

Santayana's first work was in verse, *Sonnets and Poems* (1894). It is a wise seriousness which is here proclaimed, although the idiom is as traditional as the figures are orthodox. *The Sense of Beauty* (1896), and *The Life of Reason* (1905), received far more

attention than Santayana's earlier verse. Having in the interval achieved fame as a philosopher, it was with an almost apologetic air that Santayana prefaced his collected *Poems* which, after a process of revision, appeared in 1923. "Of impassioned tenderness or Dionysiac frenzy I have nothing, nor even of that magic and pregnancy of phrase—really the creation of a fresh idiom—which marks the high lights of poetry. Even if my temperament had been naturally warmer, the fact that the English language (and I can write no other with assurance) was not my mother-tongue would of itself preclude any inspired use of it on my part; its roots do not quite reach to my center. I never drank in in childhood the homely cadences and ditties which in pure spontaneous poetry set the essential key."

Yet, as Santayana himself maintained later on, the thoughts which prompted his verses could not have been transcribed in any other form. If the prosody is worn somewhat thin, it is because the poet-philosopher chose the classic mold in the belief that the innate freedom of poets to hazard new forms does not abolish the freedom to attempt the old ones. The moralizing is personal, even the rhetoric is justified. "Here is the hand of an apprentice, but of an apprentice in a great school."

THE RUSTIC AT THE PLAY

Our youth is like a rustic at the play
That cries aloud in simple-hearted fear,
Curses the villain, shudders at the fray,
And weeps before the maiden's wreathèd bier.
Yet once familiar with the changeful show,
He starts no longer at a brandished knife,
But, his heart chastened at the sight of woe,
Ponders the mirrored sorrows of his life.
So tutored too, I watch the moving art
Of all this magic and impassioned pain
That tells the story of the human heart
In a false instance, such as poets feign;
I smile, and keep within the parchment furled
That prompts the passions of this strutting world.

"O WORLD, THOU CHOOSEST NOT THE BETTER PART"

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.

RICHARD HOVEY

Richard Hovey was born May 4, 1864, at Normal, Illinois, and graduated from Dartmouth in 1885. After leaving college, he became, in rapid succession, theologian, actor, journalist, lecturer, professor of English literature at Barnard, poet and dramatist.

His first volume, *The Laurel: An Ode* (1889), betrayed the over-musical influence of Lanier but gave promise of that extraordinary facility which often brought Hovey perilously close to mere technique. His exuberant virility found its outlet in the series of poems published in collaboration with Bliss Carman—the three volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* (1894, 1896, 1900). Here he let himself go completely; nothing remained sober or static. His lines flung themselves across the page; danced with intoxicating abandon; shouted, laughed, and carried off the reader in a gale of high spirits. The famous *Stein Song* is an interlude in the midst of a far finer poem that, with its flavor of Whitman, begins:

I said in my heart, "I am sick of four walls and a ceiling.
I have need of the sky.
I have business with the grass.
I will up and get me away where the hawk is wheeling,
Low and high,
And the slow clouds go by.
I will get me away to the waters that glass
The clouds as they pass. . . ."

Hovey's attitude to his art was expressed in his own words concerning the poet: "It is not his mission," wrote Hovey in the *Dartmouth Magazine*, "to write elegant canzonettas for the delectation of the *dilettanti*, but to comfort the sorrowful and hearten the despairing, to champion the oppressed and declare to humanity its inalienable rights, to lay open to the world the heart of man—all its heights and depths, all its glooms and glories, to reveal the beauty in things and breathe into his fellows a love of it." This almost too conscious awareness of the poet's "mission" often marred Hovey's work; in responding to his program, he frequently overstressed his ringing enthusiasm, strained his own muscularity. But his power was as unflagging as his energy was persuasive.

Some of Hovey's best work was accomplished without shouting. The little known "Contemporaries" showed how well he could handle double portraiture, antedating the psycho-philosophical delineations of E. A. Robinson. As he grew older, Hovey became dissatisfied with the wanderlusty motif and its panacea of open roads and youthful comradeship. His subjects grew larger, his symbols were less obvious and not confined to "something potent brimming through the earth." The work on which he was engaged at the time of his death is significant; *Launcelot and Guenevere: A Poem in Five Dramas*, exemplary in its restrained force.

Although the varied lyrics in *Songs from Vagabondia* are the heartiest examples of Hovey, a representative collection of his riper work may be found in *Along the Trail* (1898). Hovey was slow to mature; this volume, in conjunction with the uncompleted *Taliesin: A Masque*, shows his later, more intensive power. The mood reflected is spiritual rather than physical; the note is high but never shrill. Besides the later work, *Along the Trail* contains "Spring" and the stirring "Comrades" in full.

Hovey died, during his thirty-sixth year, in New York, February 24, 1900.

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever—
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!

Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under—
And whether we're wrong or whether we're right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck!
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!
Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

UNMANIFEST DESTINY[1]

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star
  Compelled to what unchosen end,

Across the sea that knows no beach,
  The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
  Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
  To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
  My country, serves Its dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
  Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
  I only know it shall be great.

[1] The phrase "manifest destiny," which came into ordinary usage during the Spanish-American War, was meant to indicate America's paternal (or, as the opposing faction claimed, imperialistic) mission. Hovey was among those who indignantly denied any but unselfish motives to the conduct of his country.

LOVE IN THE WINDS

When I am standing on a mountain crest,
Or hold the tiller in the dashing spray,
My love of you leaps foaming in my breast,
Shouts with the winds and sweeps to their foray.
My heart bounds with the horses of the sea
And plunges in the wild ride of the night,
Flaunts in the teeth of tempest the large glee
That rides out Fate and welcomes gods to fight.

Ho, love, I laugh aloud for love of you,
Glad that our love is fellow to rough weather,—
No fretful orchid hothoused from the dew,
But hale and hardy as the highland heather,
Rejoicing in the wind that stings and thrills,
Comrade of ocean, playmate of the hills.

COMRADES[1]

Comrades, pour the wine tonight,
For the parting is with dawn.
Oh, the clink of cups together,
With the daylight coming on!
Greet the morn
With a double horn,
When strong men drink together!

Comrades, gird your swords tonight,
For the battle is with dawn.
Oh, the clash of shields together,
With the triumph coming on!
Greet the foe
And lay him low,
When strong men fight together.

Comrades, watch the tides tonight,
For the sailing is with dawn.
Oh, to face the spray together,
With the tempest coming on!

[1] This is the lyric interlude from the long poem of the same name composed by Hovey in 1893.

Greet the Sea
With a shout of glee,
When strong men roam together.

Comrades, give a cheer tonight,
For the dying is with dawn.
Oh, to meet the stars together,
With the silence coming on!
Greet the end
As a friend a friend,
When strong men die together.

CONTEMPORARIES

"A barbered woman's man,"—yes, so
He seemed to me a twelvemonth since;
And so he may be—let it go—
Admit his flaws—we need not wince
To find our noblest not all great.
What of it? He is still the prince,
And we the pages of his state.

The world applauds his words; his fame
Is noised wherever knowledge be;
Even the trader hears his name,
As one far inland hears the sea;
The lady quotes him to the beau
Across the cup of Russian tea;
They know him and they do not know.

I know him. In the nascent years
Men's eyes shall see him as one crowned;
His voice shall gather in their ears
With each new age prophetic sound;
And you and I and all the rest,
Whose brows today are laurel-bound,
Shall be but plumes upon his crest.

A year ago this man was poor,—
This Alfred whom the nations praise;
He stood a beggar at my door
For one mere word to help him raise

From fainting limbs and shoulders bent
The burden of the weary days;
And I withheld it—and he went.

I knew him then, as I know now,
Our largest heart, our loftiest mind;
Yet for the curls upon his brow
And for his lisp, I could not find
The helping word, the cheering touch.
Ah, to be just, as well as kind,—
It costs so little and so much!

It seemed unmanly in my sight
That he, whose spirit was so strong
To lead the blind world to the light,
Should look so like the mincing throng
Who advertise the tailor's art.
It angered me—I did him wrong—
I grudged my groat and shut my heart.

I might have been the prophet's friend,
Helped him who is to help the world!
Now, when the striving is at end,
The reek-stained battle-banners furled,
And the age hears its muster-call,
Then I, because his hair was curled,
I shall have lost my chance—that's all.

A STEIN SONG

(*From "Spring"*)

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime
For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into daytime
With the sunlight of good cheer!
For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,
And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
To the banjo of the spring,
Then it's no wonder whether
The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
And we've life and love to spare:
And it's birds of a feather
When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
When his children have their fling;
And life slips its tether
When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

MADISON CAWEIN

Madison (Julius) Cawein was born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1865, and spent most of his life in the state of his birth. He wrote an enormous quantity of verse, publishing more than twenty volumes of pleasant, sometimes exuberant, but seldom distinguished, poetry. *Lyrics and Idyls* (1890) and *Vale of Tempe* (1905) contain his most characteristic stanzas, packed with the lush, adjectival love of Nature that led certain of his admirers to call him (and, one must admit, the alliteration was tempting) "the Keats of Kentucky."

Cawein's work divides itself into two distinct veins. In the one he dealt with the scenes and incidents of his mountain environment: the sag of an old house in the hills, the echoes of a feud, rumblings of the Ku Klux Klan, the ghastly details of a lynching. In his other mood (the one which unfortunately possessed him the greater part of the time) he spent page after page romanticizing Nature, touching up his already painted lilies, polishing his thinly

plated artificialities until the base metal showed through. He pictured all outdoors with painstaking detail. And yet it is somehow unreal, prettified, remote. Every now and then, with an irritating frequency, he tries to transport his audience to a literary Fairyland; but the reader is quickly wearied by the almost interminable procession of fays, gnomes, nixies, elves, dryads, sprites, pucks and fauns—be they ever so lyrical.

In spite of Cawein's too profuse lyricism, several of his pieces will doubtless remain, though it is not likely that the survivors will be the sugared sweetmeats by which his champions (including William Dean Howells) set such store. Those which show signs of more than contemporary life are those in which the poet's fancy is natural rather than forced, restrained rather than urged to the limits of literary imagination.

Cawein died in Kentucky in 1914. His twenty volumes desperately need winnowing; a selected one-volume edition might lead to a new appraisal. It is doubtful whether any poetry ever belonged more definitely to the "literature of escape," most of it having been written during the nineteen years while Cawein was employed as cashier in a Kentucky gambling house.

SNOW

The moon, like a round device
On a shadowy shield of war,
Hangs white in a heaven of ice
With a solitary star.

The wind has sunk to a sigh,
And the waters are stern with frost;
And gray, in the eastern sky,
The last snow-cloud is lost.

White fields, that are winter-starved,
Black woods, that are winter-fraught,
Cold, harsh as a face death-carved
With the iron of some black thought.

THE MAN HUNT

The woods stretch wild to the mountain side,
And the brush is deep where a man may hide.

They have brought the bloodhounds up again
To the roadside rock where they found the slain.

They have brought the bloodhounds up, and they
Have taken the trail to the mountain way.

Three times they circled the trail and crossed,
And thrice they found it and thrice they lost.

Now straight through the pines and the underbrush
They follow the scent through the forest's hush.

And their deep-mouthed bay is a pulse of fear
In the heart of the wood that the man must hear.

The man who crouches among the trees
From the stern-faced men that follow these.

A huddle of rocks that the ooze has mossed—
And the trail of the hunted again is lost.

An upturned pebble; a bit of ground
A heel has trampled—the trail is found.

And the woods reëcho the bloodhounds' bay
As again they take to the mountain way.

A rock; a ribbon of road; a ledge,
With a pine-tree clutching its crumbling edge.

A pine, that the lightning long since clave,
Whose huge roots hollow a ragged cave.

A shout; a curse; and a face aghast,
And the human quarry is laired at last.

The human quarry, with clay-clogged hair
And eyes of terror, who waits them there;

That glares and crouches and rising then
Hurls clods and curses at dogs and men.

Until the blow of a gun-butt lays
Him stunned and bleeding upon his face.

A rope, a prayer, and an oak-tree near.
And a score of hands to swing him clear.

A grim black thing for the setting sun
And the moon and the stars to look upon.

THE WINDS

Those hewers of the clouds, the Winds,—that lair
At the four compass-points,—are out tonight;
I hear their sandals trample on the height,
I hear their voices trumpet through the air:
Builders of storm, God's workmen, now they bear
Up the steep stair of sky, on backs of might,
Huge tempest bulks, while—sweat that blinds their sight—
The rain is shaken from tumultuous hair:
Now, sweepers of the firmament, they broom
Like gathered dust, the rolling mists along
Heaven's floors of sapphire; all the beautiful blue
Of skyey corridor and celestial room—
Preparing, with large laughter and loud song,
For the white moon and stars to wander through.

DESERTED

The old house leans upon a tree
  Like some old man upon a staff:
The night wind in its ancient porch
  Sounds like a hollow laugh.

The heaven is wrapped in flying clouds
  As grandeur cloaks itself in gray:
The starlight flitting in and out,
  Glints like a lanthorn ray.

The dark is full of whispers. Now
  A fox-hound howls: and through the night,
Like some old ghost from out its grave,
  The moon comes misty white.

William Vaughn Moody was born in Spencer, Indiana, July 8, 1869, and was educated at Harvard. After graduation, he spent the remaining eighteen years of his life in travel and intensive study—he taught, for eight years, at the University of Chicago—his death coming at the very height of his creative power.

The Masque of Judgment, his first work, was published in 1900. A richer and more representative collection appeared the year following; in *Poems* (1901) Moody effected that mingling of challenging lyricism and spiritual philosophy which became more and more insistent. (See Preface.) Throughout his career, and particularly in such lines as the hotly expostulating "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines" and the majestic uncompleted "The Death of Eve," Moody successfully achieved the rare union of poet and preacher. "Gloucester Moors" was an outcry against the few exploiting the many; "The Quarry" and "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" were impassioned and prophetic. His last extended works had an epic quality which, with their too crowded details and difficult diction, effectually prevented them from becoming popular. Further, Moody did not offer a happy solution of life as was attempted by the vague socialism of Markham or the reckless optimism of Hovey; he maintained, rather, that men's spirits were "plagued, impatient things, all dream and unaccountable desire." Creation, he felt, was moving toward some far end, but he never presumed to know the goal, he would not even declare of our destiny, "I only know it shall be great." Man, to Moody, must make himself greater before he could claim to be the object of great purposes.

Of the lyrics woven in "The Fire-Bringer" most anthologists have preferred the song beginning:

> Of wounds and sore defeat
> I made my battle stay.

The one reprinted here has not only the virtue of being little known but seems to the present editor more typical of its author's spirit.

Moody's prose play *The Great Divide* (1907) was extremely successful when produced by Henry Miller. *The Faith Healer* (1909), another play in prose, because of its more exalted tone, did not win the favor of the theater-going public. A complete edition of *The Poems and Poetic Dramas of William Vaughn Moody* was published in 1912 in two volumes.

In the summer of 1909 Moody was stricken with the illness from which he never recovered. Had he lived he would probably

have become one of the major poets of his country. He died in October, 1910.

PANDORA'S SONG

(From "The Fire-Bringer")

I stood within the heart of God;
It seemed a place that I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair,—
Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; his words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"Here is my meat and wine," He said,
"My love, my toil, my ancient care;
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"Here are my seasons: winter, spring,
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills."

GLOUCESTER MOORS

A mile behind is Gloucester town
Where the fishing fleets put in,
A mile ahead the land dips down
And the woods and farms begin.

Here where the moors stretch free
In the high blue afternoon,
Are the marching sun and talking sea,
And the racing winds that wheel and flee
On the flying heels of June.

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The wild geranium holds its dew
Long in the bowlder's shade.
Wax-red hangs the cup
From the huckleberry boughs,
In barberry bells the gray moths sup,
Or where the choke-cherry lifts high up
Sweet bowls for their carouse.

Over the shelf of the sandy cove
Beach-peas blossom late.
By copse and cliff the swallows rove
Each calling to his mate.
Seaward the sea-gulls go,
And the land-birds all are here:
That green-gold flash was a vireo,
And yonder flame where the marsh-flags grow
Was a scarlet tanager.

This earth is not the steadfast place
We landsmen build upon;
From deep to deep she varies pace,
And while she comes is gone.
Beneath my feet I feel
Her smooth bulk heave and dip;
With velvet plunge and soft upreel
She swings and steadies to her keel
Like a gallant, gallant ship.

These summer clouds she sets for sail,
The sun is her masthead light,
She tows the moon like a pinnace frail
Where her phosphor wake churns bright.

Now hid, now looming clear,
On the face of the dangerous blue
The star fleets tack and wheel and veer,
But on, but on does the old earth steer
As if her port she knew.

God, dear God! Does she know her port,
Though she goes so far about?
Or blind astray, does she make her sport
To brazen and chance it out?
I watched when her captains passed:
She were better captainless.
Men in the cabin, before the mast,
But some were reckless and some aghast,
And some sat gorged at mess.

By her battened hatch I leaned and caught
Sounds from the noisome hold,—
Cursing and sighing of souls distraught
And cries too sad to be told.
Then I strove to go down and see;
But they said, "Thou art not of us!"
I turned to those on the deck with me
And cried, "Give help!" But they said, "Let be:
Our ship sails faster thus."

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The alder-clump where the brook comes through
Breeds cresses in its shade.
To be out of the moiling street
With its swelter and its sin!
Who has given to me this sweet,
And given my brother dust to eat?
And when will his wage come in?

Scattering wide or blown in ranks,
Yellow and white and brown,
Boats and boats from the fishing banks
Come home to Gloucester town.

There is cash to purse and spend,
There are wives to be embraced,
Hearts to borrow and hearts to lend,
And hearts to take and keep to the end,—
O little sails, make haste!

But thou, vast outbound ship of souls,
What harbor town for thee?
What shapes, when thy arriving tolls,
Shall crowd the banks to see?
Shall all the happy shipmates then
Stand singing brotherly?
Or shall a haggard ruthless few
Warp her over and bring her to,
While the many broken souls of men
Fester down in the slaver's pen,
And nothing to say or do?

ROAD-HYMN FOR THE START

Leave the early bells at chime,
Leave the kindled hearth to blaze,
Leave the trellised panes where children linger out the waking-time,
Leave the forms of sons and fathers trudging through the misty ways,
Leave the sounds of mothers taking up their sweet, laborious days.

Pass them by! even while our soul
Yearns to them with keen distress.
Unto them a part is given; we will strive to see the whole.
Dear shall be the banquet table where their singing spirits press;
Dearer be our sacred hunger, and our pilgrim loneliness.

We have felt the ancient swaying
Of the earth before the sun,
On the darkened marge of midnight heard sidereal rivers playing;
Rash it was to bathe our souls there, but we plunged and all was done.
That is lives and lives behind us—lo, our journey is begun!

Careless where our face is set,
Let us take the open way,
What we are no tongue has told us: Errand-goers who forget?
Soldiers heedless of their harry? Pilgrim people gone astray?
We have heard a voice cry "Wander!" That was all we heard it say.

Ask no more: 'Tis much, 'tis much!
Down the road the day-star calls;
Touched with change in the wide heavens, like a leaf the frost winds touch,
Flames the failing moon a moment, ere it shrivels white and falls;
Hid aloft, a wild throat holdeth sweet and sweeter intervals.

Leave him still to ease in song
Half his little heart's unrest:
Speech is his, but we may journey toward the life for which we long.
God, who gives the bird its anguish, maketh nothing manifest,
But upon our lifted foreheads pours the boon of endless quest.

FROM "JETSAM"

Once at a simple turning of the way
I met God walking; and although the dawn
Was large behind Him, and the morning stars
Circled and sang about his face as birds
About the fieldward morning cottager,
My coward heart said faintly, "Let us haste!
Day grows and it is far to market-town."
Once where I lay in darkness after fight,
Sore smitten, thrilled a little thread of song
Searching and searching all my muffled sense
Until it shook sweet pangs through all my blood,
And I beheld one globed in ghostly fire
Singing, star-strong, her golden canticle;
And her mouth sang, "The hosts of Hate roll past,
A dance of dust-motes in the sliding sun;
Love's battle comes on the wide wings of storm,
From east to west one legion! Wilt thou strive?"

Then, since the splendor of her sword-bright gaze
Was heavy on me with yearning and with scorn,
My sick heart muttered, "Yea, the little strife,
Yet see, the grievous wounds! I fain would sleep."

O heart, shalt thou not once be strong to go
Where all sweet throats are calling, once be brave
To slake with deed thy dumbness? Let us go
The path her singing face looms low to point,
Pendulous, blanched with longing, shedding flames
Of silver on the brown grope of the flood;
For all my spirit's soilure is put by
And all my body's soilure, lacking now
But the last lustral sacrament of death
To make me clean for those near-searching eyes
That question yonder whether all be well,
And pause a little ere they dare rejoice.

Question and be thou answered, passionate face!
For I am worthy, worthy now at last
After so long unworth; strong now at last
To give myself to beauty and be saved.

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES[1]

Streets of the roaring town,
Hush for him; hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.
Hush! Let him have his state.
Give him his soldier's crown,
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill.
But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet has been blown.
Wreathe pride now for his granite brow, lay love on his breast of stone.

[1] Compare the point of view expressed in Hovey's "Unmanifest Destiny" on page 139. This poem was likewise written at the time of the Spanish-American War.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim,
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make it up to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we sent him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes.
He did what we bade him do.

Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight he fought was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's own heart's-blood.

A flag for a soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation robed in gloom
With its faithless past shall strive.

Let him never dream that his bullet's scream went wide of its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled and sinned in the dark.

GEORGE STERLING

George Sterling was born at Sag Harbor, New York, December 1, 1869, and educated at various private schools in the Eastern States. He moved to the Far West about 1895 and lived in California until, discouraged and dipsomaniac, he met death by his own hand in 1926.

Of Sterling's ten volumes of poetry, *The Testimony of the Suns* (1903), *A Wine of Wizardry* (1908) and *The House of Orchids and Other Poems* (1911) are the most characteristic. Ambrose Bierce was the first to hail Sterling with what now seems extravagant praise; he declared that *A Wine of Wizardry* contained some of the greatest lines in English poetry.

As the titles indicate, this is poetry of a flamboyant and rhetorical type, of luxuriant sentences and emotions decorated in "the grand manner." Yet Sterling added vigor to his ornate tropes. He was not always hurling suns about, sweeping the skies with

orchids, strange gods and exotic stars. His extravagances, partly temperamental, partly climatic, are Californian—as he intended them to be. He was not at ease when attempting to curb his grandiose periods, but a few of his simpler verses, though not in his most familiar vein, show what Sterling might have accomplished with more discipline. The least memorable poems are not without a redeeming line.

A comprehensive *Selected Poems* was published in 1923.

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

And least of all he holds the human swarm—
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

THE MASTER MARINER

My grandsire sailed three years from home
And slew unmoved the sounding whale:
Here on a windless beach I roam
And watch far out the hardy sail.

The lions of the surf that cry
Upon this lion-colored shore
On reefs of midnight met his eye:
He knew their fangs as I their roar.

My grandsire sailed uncharted seas,
And toll of all their leagues he took:
I scan the shallow bays at ease,
And tell their colors in a book.

The anchor-chains his music made
And wind in shrouds and running-gear:
The thrush at dawn beguiles my glade,
And once, 'tis said, I woke to hear.

My grandsire in his ample fist
The long harpoon upheld to men:
Behold obedient to my wrist
A gray gull's-feather for my pen!

Upon my grandsire's leathern cheek
Five zones their bitter bronze had set:
Some day their hazards I will seek,
I promise me at times. Not yet.

I think my grandsire now would turn
A mild but speculative eye
On me, my pen and its concern,
Then gaze again to sea—and sigh.

THE NIGHT OF GODS

Their mouths have drunken the eternal wine—
The draught that Baal in oblivion sips.
Unseen about their courts the adder slips,
Unheard the sucklings of the leopard whine;
The toad has found a resting-place divine,
And bloats in stupor between Ammon's lips.
O Carthage and the unreturning ships,
The fallen pinnacle, the shifting Sign!

Lo! when I hear from voiceless court and fane
Time's adoration of eternity,—
The cry of kingdoms past and gods undone,—
I stand as one whose feet at noontide gain
A lonely shore; who feels his soul set free,
And hears the blind sea chanting to the sun.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Edwin Arlington Robinson was born December 22, 1869, in the village of Head Tide, Maine. When he was still a child, the

Robinson family moved to the nearby town of Gardiner, which figures prominently in Robinson's poetry as "Tilbury Town." In 1891 he entered Harvard College, leaving that institution in 1893. A little collection of verse (*The Torrent and the Night Before*) was privately printed in 1896 and the following year much of it was incorporated with other work in *The Children of the Night* (1897).

Somewhat later, Robinson was struggling in various capacities to make a living in New York, five years passing before the publication of *Captain Craig* (1902). This richly detailed narrative, recalling Browning's method, increased Robinson's audience and his work was brought to the attention of Theodore Roosevelt (then President of the United States), who became interested in the poet who was, at the time, earning a living as an inspector in the New York Subway, then in course of construction. In 1904, President Roosevelt offered him a clerkship in the New York Custom House. Robinson held this position from 1905 to 1910, leaving it the same year which marked the appearance of his volume, *The Town Down the River*. Robinson's three books, up to this time, showed his clean, firmly drawn quality, but, in spite of their excellences, they seem little more than a succession of preludes for the dynamic volume that was to establish him in the first rank of American poets. *The Man Against the Sky*, in many ways Robinson's fullest and most penetrating work, appeared in 1916. (See Preface.) This was followed by *The Three Taverns* (1920), a less arresting but equally concentrated, distinctively voiced collection of poems.

In all these books there is manifest a searching for truth, for the light beyond illusion. But Robinson's transcendentalism is no mere emotional escape; his temper subjects the slightest phrase to critical analysis, his intuitions are supported—or scrutinized—by a vigorous intellectuality. Purely as a psychological portrait painter, Robinson has given American literature an entire gallery of memorable figures: Richard Cory, who "glittered when he walked," gnawing his dark heart while he fluttered pulses with his apparent good fortune; Miniver Cheevy, frustrate dreamer, sighing "for what was not"; Aaron Stark, the miser with eyes "like little dollars in the dark"; the nameless mother in "The Gift of God," transmuting her mediocrity of a son into a shining demigod; Bewick Finzer, the wreck of wealth, coming for his pittance, "familiar as an old mistake, and futile as regret." Such sympathetic illuminations reveal Robinson's sensitive power, especially in his projection of the apparent failures of life. Indeed, much of Robinson's work seems a protest, a criticism by implication, of that type of standardized success which so much

of the world worships. Frustration and defeat are like an organ-point heard below the varying music of his verse; failure is almost glorified in his pages.

Technically, Robinson is as precise as he is dexterous. He is, in company with Frost, a master of the slowly diminished ending. But he is capable of cadences as rich as that which ends "The Gift of God," as pungent as the climax of "Calvary," as brilliantly fanciful as the sestet of his sonnet, "The Sheaves," as muted but sustained as the finale of "Eros Turannos" which might have been composed by a more controlled Swinburne.

There is never a false image or a blurred line in any of his verses which, while adhering to the strictest models and executed according to traditional forms, are always fresh and surprising. It is interesting to observe how the smoothness of his rhymes, playing against the hard outlines of his verse, emphasizes the epigrammatic strength of poems like "The Gift of God," that magnificent modern ballad "John Gorham," "For a Dead Lady," and "The Master," one of the finest evocations of Lincoln which is, at the same time, a bitter commentary on the commercialism of the times and the "shopman's test of age and worth."

Robinson's blank verse is scarcely less individual. It is astringent, personal, packed with the instant. In "Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford" we have the clearest and most human portrait of Shakespeare ever attempted; the lines run as fluently as good conversation, as inevitably as a perfect melody. In his reanimations of the Arthurian legends, *Merlin* (1917), *Launcelot* (1920), *Tristram* (1927), Robinson, shaming the tea-table idyls of Tennyson, has colored the tale with somber reflections of the collapse of old orders, the darkness of an age in ashes.

Avon's Harvest, which the author has called "a dime novel in verse," a study of a fear-haunted, hate-driven man, appeared in 1921. In the same year the Macmillan Company issued his *Collected Poems,* which received the Pulitzer Prize for 1921. Subsequent volumes strengthened his admirers' convictions and disproved any fears that Robinson might have "written himself out." *Roman Bartholow* (1923) is a single poem of almost two hundred pages; a dramatic and introspective narrative in blank verse. *The Man Who Died Twice* (1924), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for that year, is likewise one long poem: a tale which is a cross between a grotesque recital and inspired metaphysics. Curiously enough, the mixture is one of Robinson's greatest triumphs; none of his portraits, either miniatures or full-length canvases, has given us a profounder insight of a tortured soul than this of Fernando Nash, "the king who lost his crown before he had it."

Dionysus in Doubt (1925) begins and ends with a caustic

arraignment of our mechanistic civilization, and is primarily a scornful and carefully premeditated condemnation of the Eighteenth Amendment, an attack which never descends to polemics or political diatribe. Robinson's ironic accents lift every phrase above the argumentative matter; the darkest of his doubts are illumined by "the salvage of a smile." Besides two other longish poems, this volume includes eighteen sonnets which again display Robinson's supremacy in the form. Technically astonishing, the values lie far beyond technique. Time and again, he packs huge scenes into fourteen lines; if sonnets can assume the proportion of dramatic narratives, Robinson's have achieved this almost impossible feat.

Possibly the fact that Robinson had already won the Pulitzer Prize twice, possibly the increasing interest of his work may have accounted for his increased audience. Not even his most enthusiastic admirers awaited the reception accorded to *Tristram* (1927). Adopted by the most prominent book-club as its "book-of-the-month," awarded unstinted praise and the Pulitzer Prize for the third time, it outsold most "best-selling" novels. This was something of a phenomenon, for *Tristram* was not only a single poem of over forty thousand words, it was Robinson's most intricate and knotted work. But it was no mere problem in involution; Robinson, as though reacting against the charge of Puritanism, abandoned himself to a drama passionate and headlong. Using the older version rather than Wagner's adaptation of the tragedy, the American poet expressed the self-torture of the mind and the catharsis of silence after turbulent speech.

Cavender's House (1929) was scarcely less esteemed. Formerly regarded as a poet's poet, the later volumes established Robinson in popular favor, no matter from what epoch he chose his theme. *Tristram* was medieval, *Cavender's House* was modern. Like *Avon's Harvest* and *Roman Bartholow*, the latter was melodrama glorified, but sharper and tenser than its predecessors. Both renewed the inevitable—and false—comparisons. Robinson's manner was likened to Browning's, his matter (particularly in the Arthurian tales) to Tennyson's. The comparison to Browning, though superficial and inaccurate, is at least comprehensible. The author of *Merlin*, like the author of *Sordello*, delights in subtly psychological portraiture, in the half-withheld inner drama, in the shift of suspensions and nuances of tension. But where Browning is forthright, Robinson is tangential; where Browning is lavish with imagery and flaring interjections, Robinson is sparse in metaphor and so economic with words that almost every phrase seems twisted and wrung of everything except its essential meaning. (Actually, his lean sentences are rich in implications beyond their statements.) But the principal dissimilarity lies in their *Weltanschauung;* here

they are diametrically opposed. Where Browning regards the universe compact of sweetness and light, Robinson observes a scheme whose chief components are bitterness and blight; the realm where "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world" becomes (as in the significantly entitled *The Man Against the Sky*) a place where

> He may go forward like a stoic Roman
> Where pangs and terrors in his pathway lie—
> Or, seizing the swift logic of a woman,
> Curse God and die.

Although Robinson was accused of holding consistently a negative attitude toward life, his poetry—and *Cavender's House* was only one instance—reveals a restless, uncertain but persistent search for moral values. This quest—and questioning—of ultimates runs through his work as it ran through an age no longer satisfied with arid skepticism. It is significant that the same year which disclosed Eliot turning to a faith beyond intellect showed Robinson driving past reason to find

> . . . There must be God; or if not God, a purpose and a law.

This desire for a deeper faith kept him plunging through a darkness which most of his contemporaries could not even face. The conclusion of his sonnet to Crabbe might well be applied to him:

> Whether or not we read him, we can feel
> From time to time the vigor of his name
> Against us like a finger for the shame
> And emptiness of what our souls reveal
> In books that are as altars where we kneel
> To consecrate the flicker, not the flame.

Since 1911 Robinson has lived most of his summers at the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire, spending his winters in Boston and New York. A new *Collected Poems*, containing the later longer works, was published in 1929.

MINIVER CHEEVY

> Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
> Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
> He wept that he was ever born,
> And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the medieval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

FOR A DEAD LADY

No more with overflowing light
Shall fill the eyes that now are faded,
Nor shall another's fringe with night
Their woman-hidden world as they did.

No more shall quiver down the days
The flowing wonder of her ways,
Whereof no language may requite
The shifting and the many-shaded.

The grace, divine, definitive,
Clings only as a faint forestalling;
The laugh that love could not forgive
Is hushed, and answers to no calling;
The forehead and the little ears
Have gone where Saturn keeps the years;
The breast where roses could not live
Has done with rising and with falling.

The beauty, shattered by the laws
That have creation in their keeping,
No longer trembles at applause,
Or over children that are sleeping;
And we who delve in beauty's lore
Know all that we have known before
Of what inexorable cause
Makes Time so vicious in his reaping.

CALVARY

Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary;
We gibed him, as he went, with houndish glee,
Till his dimmed eyes for us did overflow;
We cursed his vengeless hands thrice wretchedly,—
And this was nineteen hundred years ago.
But after nineteen hundred years the shame
Still clings, and we have not made good the loss
That outraged faith has entered in his name.
Ah, when shall come love's courage to be strong!
Tell me, O Lord—tell me, O Lord, how long
Are we to keep Christ writhing on the cross!

THE MASTER[1]

(*Lincoln. Supposed to have been written not long after the Civil War*)

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.
Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

[1] See pages 105, 189, 333, 334, 349, 354, 467.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we had applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smoldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

AN OLD STORY

Strange that I did not know him then,
That friend of mine.
I did not even show him then
One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
Once, in my pride.
I never knew the worth of him
Until he died.

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

BEWICK FINZER

Time was when his half million drew
The breath of six per cent;
But soon the worm of what-was-not
Fed hard on his content;
And something crumbled in his brain
When his half million went.

Time passed, and filled along with his
The place of many more;
Time came, and hardly one of us
Had credence to restore,
From what appeared one day, the man
Whom we had known before.

The broken voice, the withered neck,
The coat worn out with care,
The cleanliness of indigence,
The brilliance of despair,
The fond imponderable dreams
Of affluence,—all were there.

Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,
Fares hard now in the race,
With heart and eye that have a task
When he looks in the face
Of one who might so easily
Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unfailing for the loan
We give and then forget;
He comes, and probably for years
Will he be coming yet,—
Familiar as an old mistake,
And futile as regret.

REUBEN BRIGHT

Because he was a butcher and thereby
Did earn an honest living (and did right)
I would not have you think that Reuben Bright
Was any more a brute than you or I;
For when they told him that his wife must die,
He stared at them and shook with grief and fright,
And cried like a great baby half that night,
And made the women cry to see him cry.

And after she was dead, and he had paid
The singers and the sexton and the rest,
He packed a lot of things that she had made
Most mournfully away in an old chest

Of hers, and put some chopped-up cedar boughs
In with them, and tore down the slaughter-house.

GEORGE CRABBE

Give him the darkest inch your shelf allows,
Hide him in lonely garrets, if you will,—
But his hard, human pulse is throbbing still
With the sure strength that fearless truth endows.
In spite of all fine science disavows,
Of his plain excellence and stubborn skill
There yet remains what fashion cannot kill,
Though years have thinned the laurel from his brows.

Whether or not we read him, we can feel
From time to time the vigor of his name
Against us like a finger for the shame
And emptiness of what our souls reveal
In books that are as altars where we kneel
To consecrate the flicker, not the flame.

LUKE HAVERGAL

Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal,
There where the vines cling crimson on the wall,
And in the twilight wait for what will come.
The leaves will whisper there of her, and some,
Like flying words, will strike you as they fall;
But go, and if you listen, she will call.
Go to the western gate, Luke Havergal—
Luke Havergal.

No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies
To rift the fiery night that's in your eyes;
But there, where western glooms are gathering,
The dark will end the dark, if anything:
God slays himself with every leaf that flies,
And hell is more than half of paradise.
No, there is not a dawn in eastern skies—
In eastern skies.

Out of a grave I come to tell you this,
Out of a grave I come to quench the kiss
That flames upon your forehead with a glow
That blinds you to the way that you must go.
Yes, there is yet one way to where she is,
Bitter, but one that faith may never miss.
Out of a grave I come to tell you this—
To tell you this.

There is the western gate, Luke Havergal,
There are the crimson leaves upon the wall.
Go, for the winds are tearing them away,—
Nor think to riddle the dead words they say,
Nor any more to feel them as they fall;
But go, and if you trust her she will call.
There is the western gate, Luke Havergal—
Luke Havergal.

JOHN GORHAM

"Tell me what you're doing over here, John Gorham,
Sighing hard and seeming to be sorry when you're not;
Make me laugh or let me go now, for long faces in the moonlight
Are a sign for me to say again a word that you forgot."—

"I'm over here to tell you what the moon already
May have said or maybe shouted ever since a year ago;
I'm over here to tell you what you are, Jane Wayland,
And to make you rather sorry, I should say, for being so."—

"Tell me what you're saying to me now, John Gorham,
Or you'll never see as much of me as ribbons any more;
I'll vanish in as many ways as I have toes and fingers,
And you'll not follow far for one where flocks have been before."—

"I'm sorry now you never saw the flocks, Jane Wayland,
But you're the one to make of them as many as you need.
And then about the vanishing: It's I who mean to vanish;
And when I'm here no longer you'll be done with me indeed."—

"That's a way to tell me what I am, John Gorham!
How am I to know myself until I make you smile?
Try to look as if the moon were making faces at you,
And a little more as if you meant to stay a little while."—

"You are what it is that over rose-blown gardens
Makes a pretty flutter for a season in the sun;
You are what it is that with a mouse, Jane Wayland,
Catches him and lets him go and eats him up for fun."—

"Sure I never took you for a mouse, John Gorham;
All you say is easy, but so far from being true,
That I wish you wouldn't ever be again the one to think so;
For it isn't cats and butterflies that I would be to you."—

"All your little animals are in one picture—
One I've had before me since a year ago tonight;
And the picture where they live will be of you, Jane Wayland,
Till you find a way to kill them or to keep them out of sight."—

"Won't you ever see me as I am, John Gorham,
Leaving out the foolishness and all I never meant?
Somewhere in me there's a woman, if you know the way to find her.
Will you like me any better if I prove it and repent?"—

"I doubt if I shall ever have the time, Jane Wayland;
And I dare say all this moonlight lying round us might as well
Fall for nothing on the shards of broken urns that are forgotten,
As on two that have no longer much of anything to tell."

HOW ANNANDALE WENT OUT

"They called it Annandale—and I was there
To flourish, to find words, and to attend:
Liar, physician, hypocrite, and friend,
I watched him; and the sight was not so fair

As one or two that I have seen elsewhere:
An apparatus not for me to mend—
A wreck, with hell between him and the end,
Remained of Annandale; and I was there.

"I knew the ruin as I knew the man;
So put the two together, if you can,
Remembering the worst you know of me.
Now view yourself as I was, on the spot,
With a slight kind of engine. Do you see?
Like this . . . You wouldn't hang me? I thought not."

THE FIELD OF GLORY

War shook the land where Levi dwelt,
And fired the dismal wrath he felt,
That such a doom was ever wrought
As his, to toil while others fought;
To toil, to dream—and still to dream,
With one day barren as another;
To consummate, as it would seem,
The dry despair of his old mother.

Far off one afternoon began
The sound of man destroying man;
And Levi, sick with nameless rage,
Condemned again his heritage,
And sighed for scars that might have come,
And would, if once he could have sundered
Those harsh, inhering claims of home
That held him while he cursed and wondered.

Another day, and then there came,
Rough, bloody, ribald, hungry, lame,
But yet themselves, to Levi's door,
Two remnants of the day before.
They laughed at him and what he sought;
They jeered him and his painful acre;
But Levi knew that they had fought,
And left their manners to their Maker.

That night, for the grim widow's ears,
With hopes that hid themselves in fears,
He told of arms, and fiery deeds,
Whereat one leaps the while he reads,
And said he'd be no more a clown,
While others drew the breath of battle.
The mother looked him up and down,
And laughed—a scant laugh with a rattle.

She told him what she found to tell,
And Levi listened, and heard well
Some admonitions of a voice
That left him no cause to rejoice.—
He sought a friend, and found the stars,
And prayed aloud that they should aid him;
But they said not a word of wars,
Or of a reason why God made him.

And who's of this or that estate
We do not wholly calculate,
When baffling shades that shift and cling
Are not without their glimmering;
When even Levi, tired of faith,
Beloved of none, forgot by many,
Dismissed as an inferior wraith,
Reborn may be as great as any.

THE CLERKS

I did not think that I should find them there
When I came back again; but there they stood,
As in the days they dreamed of when young blood
Was in their cheeks and women called them fair.
Be sure they met me with an ancient air,—
And yes, there was a shop-worn brotherhood
About them; but the men were just as good,
And just as human as they ever were.

And you that ache so much to be sublime,
And you that feed yourselves with your descent,
What comes of all your visions and your fears?

Poets and kings are but the clerks of Time,
Tiering the same dull webs of discontent
Clipping the same sad alnage of the years.

THE DARK HILLS

Dark hills at evening in the west,
Where sunset hovers like a sound
Of golden horns that sang to rest
Old bones of warriors under ground,
Far now from all the bannered ways
Where flash the legions of the sun,
You fade—as if the last of days
Were fading and all wars were done.

EROS TURANNOS

She fears him, and will always ask
What fated her to choose him;
She meets in his engaging mask
All reasons to refuse him;
But what she meets and what she fears
Are less than are the downward years,
Drawn slowly to the foamless weirs
Of age, were she to lose him.

Between a blurred sagacity
That once had power to sound him,
And Love, that will not let him be
The Judas that she found him,
Her pride assuages her almost,
As if it were alone the cost.
He sees that he will not be lost.
And waits and looks around him.

A sense of ocean and old trees
Envelops and allures him;
Tradition, touching all he sees,
Beguiles and reassures him;
And all her doubts of what he says
Are dimmed with what she knows of days—
Till even prejudice delays
And fades, and she secures him.

The falling leaf inaugurates
  The reign of her confusion;
The pounding wave reverberates
  The dirge of her illusion;
And home, where passion lived and died,
Becomes a place where she can hide,
While all the town and harbor-side
  Vibrate with her seclusion.

We tell you, tapping on our brows,
  The story as it should be,
As if the story of a house
  Were told, or ever could be;
We'll have no kindly veil between
Her visions and those we have seen,—
As if we guessed what hers have been,
  Or what they are or would be.

Meanwhile we do no harm; for they
  That with a god have striven,
Not hearing much of what we say,
  Take what the god has given;
Though like waves breaking it may be,
Or like a changed familiar tree,
Or like a stairway to the sea
  Where down the blind are driven.

THE SHEAVES

Where long the shadows of the wind had rolled,
Green wheat was yielding to the change assigned;
And as by some vast magic undivined
The world was turning slowly into gold.
Like nothing that was ever bought or sold
It waited there, the body and the mind;
And with a mighty meaning of a kind
That tells the more the more it is not told.

So in a land where all days are not fair,
Fair days went on till on another day
A thousand golden sheaves were lying there,

Shining and still, but not for long to stay—
As if a thousand girls with golden hair
Might rise from where they slept and go away.

BEN JONSON ENTERTAINS A MAN FROM STRATFORD

You are a friend then, as I make it out,
Of our man Shakespeare, who alone of us
Will put an ass's head in Fairyland
As he would add a shilling to more shillings,
All most harmonious—and out of his
Miraculous inviolable increase
Fills Ilion, Rome, or any town you like
Of olden time with timeless Englishmen;
And I must wonder what you think of him—
All you down there where your small Avon flows
By Stratford, and where you're an Alderman.
Some, for a guess, would have him riding back
To be a farrier there, or say a dyer;
Or maybe one of your adept surveyors;
Or like enough the wizard of all tanners.
Not you—no fear of that; for I discern
In you a kindling of the flame that saves—
The nimble element, the true caloric;
I see it, and was told of it, moreover,
By our discriminate friend himself, no other.
Had you been one of the sad average,
As he would have it—meaning, as I take it,
The sinew and the solvent of our Island,
You'd not be buying beer for this Terpander's
Approved and estimated friend Ben Jonson;
He'd never foist it as a part of his
Contingent entertainment of a townsman
While he goes off rehearsing, as he must,
If he shall ever be the Duke of Stratford.
And my words are no shadow on your town—
Far from it; for one town's like another
As all are unlike London. Oh, he knows it—
And there's the Stratford in him; he denies it,
And there's the Shakespeare in him. So, God help him!

I tell him he needs Greek; but neither God
Nor Greek will help him. Nothing will help that man.
You see the fates have given him so much,
He must have all or perish—or look out
Of London, where he sees too many lords.
They're part of half what ails him: I suppose
There's nothing fouler down among the demons
Than what it is he feels when he remembers
The dust and sweat and ointment of his calling
With his lords looking on and laughing at him.
King as he is, he can't be king *de facto,*
And that's as well, because he wouldn't like it;
He'd frame a lower rating of men then
Than he has now; and after that would come
An abdication or an apoplexy.
He can't be king, not even king of Stratford—
Though half the world, if not the whole of it,
May crown him with a crown that fits no king
Save Lord Apollo's homesick emissary:
Not there on Avon, or on any stream
Where Naiads and their white arms are no more
Shall he find home again. It's all too bad.
But there's a comfort, for he'll have that House—
The best you ever saw; and he'll be there
Anon, as you're an Alderman. Good God!
He makes me lie awake o' nights and laugh.

And you have known him from his origin,
You tell me; and a most uncommon urchin
He must have been to the few seeing ones—
A trifle terrifying, I dare say,
Discovering a world with his man's eyes,
Quite as another lad might see some finches,
If he looked hard and had an eye for Nature.
But this one had his eyes and their foretelling,
And he had you to fare with, and what else?
He must have had a father and a mother—
In fact I've heard him say so—and a dog,
As a boy should, I venture; and the dog,
Most likely, was the only man who knew him.
A dog, for all I know, is what he needs

As much as anything right here today,
To counsel him about his disillusions,
Old aches, and parturitions of what's coming—
A dog of orders, an emeritus,
To wag his tail at him when he comes home,
And then to put his paws up on his knees
And say, "For God's sake, what's it all about?"

I don't know whether he needs a dog or not—
Or what he needs. I tell him he needs Greek;
I'll talk of rules and Aristotle with him,
And if his tongue's at home he'll say to that,
"I have your word that Aristotle knows,
And you mine that I don't know Aristotle."
He's all at odds with all the unities,
And what's yet worse it doesn't seem to matter;
He treads along through Time's old wilderness
As if the tramp of all the centuries
Had left no roads—and there are none, for him;
He doesn't see them, even with those eyes—
And that's a pity, or I say it is.
Accordingly we have him as we have him—
Going his way, the way that he goes best,
A pleasant animal with no great noise
Or nonsense anywhere to set him off—
Save only divers and inclement devils
Have made of late his heart their dwelling-place.
A flame half ready to fly out sometimes
At some annoyance may be fanned up in him,
But soon it falls, and when it falls goes out;
He knows how little room there is in there
For crude and futile animosities,
And how much for the joy of being whole,
And how much for long sorrow and old pain.
On our side there are some who may be given
To grow old wondering what he thinks of us
And some above us, who are, in his eyes,
Above himself—and that's quite right and English.
Yet here we smile, or disappoint the gods
Who made it so; the gods have always eyes
To see men scratch; and they see one down here

Who itches, manor-bitten, to the bone,
Albeit he knows himself—yes, yes, he knows—
The lord of more than England and of more
Than all the seas of England in all time
Shall ever wash. D'ye wonder that I laugh?
He sees me, and he doesn't seem to care;
And why the devil should he? I can't tell you.
I'll meet him out alone of a bright Sunday,
Trim, rather spruce, and quite the gentleman.
"What, ho, my lord!" say I. He doesn't hear me;
Wherefore I have to pause and look at him.
He's not enormous, but one looks at him.
A little on the round if you insist,
For now, God save the mark, he's growing old;
He's five and forty, and to hear him talk
These days you'd call him eighty; then you'd add
More years to that. He's old enough to be
The father of a world, and so he is.
"Ben, you're a scholar, what's the time of day?"
Says he; and there shines out of him again
An aged light that has no age or station—
The mystery that's his—a mischievous
Half-mad serenity that laughs at fame
For being won so easy, and at friends
Who laugh at him for what he wants the most,
And for his dukedom down in Warwickshire;—
By which you see we're all a little jealous. . . .
Poor Greene! I fear the color of his name
Was even as that of his ascending soul;
And he was one where there are many others—
Some scrivening to the end against their fate,
Their puppets all in ink and all to die there;
And some with hands that once would shade an eye
That scanned Euripides and Aeschylus
Will reach by this time for a pot-house mop
To slush their first and last of royalties.
Poor devils! and they all play to his hand;
For so it was in Athens and old Rome.
But that's not here or there; I've wandered off.
Greene does it, or I'm careful. Where's that boy?

Yes, he'll go back to Stratford. And we'll miss him?
Dear sir, there'll be no London here without him.
We'll all be riding, one of these fine days,
Down there to see him—and his wife won't like us;
And then we'll think of what he never said
Of women—which, if taken all in all
With what he did say, would buy many horses.
Though nowadays he's not so much for women.
"So few of them," he says, "are worth the guessing."
But there's a worm at work when he says that,
And while he says it one feels in the air
A deal of circumambient hocus-pocus.
They've had him dancing till his toes were tender,
And he can feel 'em now, come chilly rains.
There's no long cry for going into it,
However, and we don't know much about it.
But you in Stratford, like most here in London,
Have more now in the *Sonnets* than you paid for;
He's put one there with all her poison on,
To make a singing fiction of a shadow
That's in his life a fact, and always will be.
But she's no care of ours, though Time, I fear,
Will have a more reverberant ado
About her than about another one
Who seems to have decoyed him, married him,
And sent him scuttling on his way to London—
With much already learned, and more to learn,
And more to follow. Lord! how I see him now,
Pretending, maybe trying, to be like us.
Whatever he may have meant, we never had him;
He failed us, or escaped, or what you will—
And there was that about him (God knows what—
We'd flayed another had he tried it on us)
That made as many of us as had wits
More fond of all his easy distances
Than one another's noise and clap-your-shoulder.
But think you not, my friend, he'd never talk!
Talk? He was eldritch at it; and we listened—
Thereby acquiring much we knew before
About ourselves, and hitherto had held
Irrelevant, or not prime to the purpose.

And there were some, of course, and there be now,
Disordered and reduced amazedly
To resignation by the mystic seal
Of young finality the gods had laid
On everything that made him a young demon;
And one or two shot looks at him already
As he had been their executioner;
And once or twice he was, not knowing it—
Or knowing, being sorry for poor clay
And saying nothing . . . Yet, for all his engines,
You'll meet a thousand of an afternoon
Who strut and sun themselves and see around 'em
A world made out of more that has a reason
Than his, I swear, that he sees here today;
Though he may scarcely give a Fool an exit
But we mark how he sees in everything
A law that, given that we flout it once too often,
Brings fire and iron down on our naked heads.
To me it looks as if the power that made him,
For fear of giving all things to one creature,
Left out the first—faith, innocence, illusion,
Whatever 'tis that keeps us out o' Bedlam—
And thereby, for his too consuming vision,
Empowered him out of nature; though to see him,
You'd never guess what's going on inside him.
He'll break out some day like a keg of ale
With too much independent frenzy in it;
And all for cellaring what he knows won't keep,
And what he'd best forget—but that he can't.
You'll have it, and have more than I'm foretelling;
And there'll be such a roaring at the Globe
As never stunned the bleeding gladiators.
He'll have to change the color of its hair
A bit, for now he calls it Cleopatra.
Black hair would never do for Cleopatra.
But you and I are not yet two old women,
And you're a man of office. What he does
Is more to you than how it is he does it—
And that's what the Lord God has never told him.
They work together, and the Devil helps 'em;
They do it of a morning, or if not,

They do it of a night; in which event
He's peevish of a morning. He seems old;
He's not the proper stomach or the sleep—
And they're two sovran agents to conserve him
Against the fiery art that has no mercy
But what's in that prodigious grand new House.
I gather something happening in his boyhood
Fulfilled him with a boy's determination
To make all Stratford 'ware of him. Well, well,
I hope at last he'll have his joy of it,
And all his pigs and sheep and bellowing beeves,
And frogs and owls and unicorns, moreover,
Be less than hell to his attendant ears.
Oh, past a doubt we'll all go down to see him.

He may be wise. With London two days off,
Down there some wind of heaven may yet revive him,
But there's no quickening breath from anywhere
Shall make of him again the young poised faun
From Warwickshire, who'd made, it seems, already
A legend of himself before I came
To blink before the last of his first lightning.
Whatever there be, there'll be no more of that;
The coming on of his old monster Time
Has made him a still man; and he has dreams
Were fair to think on once, and all found hollow.
He knows how much of what men paint themselves
Would blister in the light of what they are;
He sees how much of what was great now shares
An eminence transformed and ordinary;
He knows too much of what the world has hushed
In others, to be loud now for himself;
He knows now at what height low enemies
May reach his heart, and high friends let him fall;
But what not even such as he may know
Bedevils him the worst: his lark may sing
At heaven's gate how he will, and for as long
As joy may listen, but *he* sees no gate,
Save one whereat the spent clay waits a little
Before the churchyard has it, and the worm.

Not long ago, late in an afternoon,
I came on him unseen down Lambeth way,
And on my life I was afear'd of him:
He gloomed and mumbled like a soul from Tophet,
His hands behind him and his head bent solemn.
"What is it now," said I, "another woman?"
That made him sorry for me, and he smiled.
"No, Ben," he mused; "it's Nothing. It's all Nothing.
We come, we go; and when we're done, we're done;
Spiders and flies—we're mostly one or t'other—
We come, we go; and when we're done, we're done."
"By God, you sing that song as if you knew it!"
Said I, by way of cheering him; "what ails ye?"
"I think I must have come down here to think,"
Says he to that, and pulls his little beard;
"Your fly will serve as well as anybody,
And what's his hour? He flies, and flies, and flies,
And in his fly's mind has a brave appearance;
And then your spider gets him in her net,
And eats him out, and hangs him up to dry.
That's Nature, the kind mother of us all.
And then your slattern housemaid swings her broom,
And where's your spider? And that's Nature, also.
It's Nature, and it's Nothing. It's all Nothing.
It's all a world where bugs and emperors
Go singularly back to the same dust,
Each in his time; and the old, ordered stars
That sang together, Ben, will sing the same
Old stave tomorrow."

When he talks like that,
There's nothing for a human man to do
But lead him to some grateful nook like this
Where we be now, and there to make him drink.
He'll drink, for love of me, and then be sick;
A sad sign always in a man of parts,
And always very ominous. The great
Should be as large in liquor as in love—
And our great friend is not so large in either:
One disaffects him, and the other fails him;
Whatso he drinks that has an antic in it,

He's wondering what's to pay in his insides;
And while his eyes are on the Cyprian
He's fribbling all the time with that damned House.
We laugh here at his thrift, but after all
It may be thrift that saves him from the devil;
God gave it, anyhow—and we'll suppose
He knew the compound of His handiwork.
Today the clouds are with him, but anon
He'll out of 'em enough to shake the tree
Of life itself and bring down fruit unheard-of—
And, throwing in the bruised and whole together,
Prepare a wine to make us drunk with wonder;
And if he live, there'll be a sunset spell
Thrown over him as over a glassed lake
That yesterday was all a black wild water.

God send he live to give us, if no more,
What now's a-rampage in him, and exhibit,
With a decent half-allegiance to the ages
An earnest of at least a casual eye
Turned once on what he owes to Gutenberg,
And to the fealty of more centuries
Than are as yet a picture in our vision.
"There's time enough—I'll do it when I'm old,
And we're immortal men," he says to that;
And then he says to me, "Ben, what's 'immortal'?
Think you by any force of ordination
It may be nothing of a sort more noisy
Than a small oblivion of component ashes
That of a dream-addicted world was once
A moving atomy much like your friend here?"
Nothing will help that man. To make him laugh
I said then he was a mad mountebank—
And by the Lord I nearer made him cry.
I could have eat an eft then, on my knees,
Tails, claws, and all of him; for I had stung
The king of men, who had no sting for me,
And I had hurt him in his memories;
And I say now, as I shall say again,
I love the man this side idolatry.
He'll do it when he's old, he says. I wonder.

He may not be so ancient as all that.
For such as he the thing that is to do
Will do itself—but there's a reckoning;
The sessions that are now too much his own,
The roiling inward of a still outside,
The churning out of all those blood-fed lines,
The nights of many schemes and little sleep,
The full brain hammered hot with too much thinking,
The vexed heart over-worn with too much aching—
This weary jangling of conjoined affairs
Made out of elements that have no end,
And all confused at once, I understand,
Is not what makes a man to live forever.
O, no, not now! He'll not be going now:
There'll be time yet for God knows what explosions
Before he goes. He'll stay awhile. Just wait:
Just wait a year or two for Cleopatra,
For she's to be a balsam and a comfort;
And that's not all a jape of mine now, either.
For granted once the old way of Apollo
Sings in a man, he may then, if he's able,
Strike unafraid whatever strings he will
Upon the last and wildest of new lyres;
Nor out of his new magic, though it hymn
The shricks of dungeoned hell, shall he create
A madness or a gloom to shut quite out
A cleaving daylight, and a last great calm,
Triumphant over shipwreck and all storms.
He might have given Aristotle creeps,
But surely would have given him his *katharsis*.
He'll not be going yet. There's too much yet
Unsung within the man. But when he goes,
I'd stake ye coin o' the realm his only care
For a phantom world he sounded and found wanting
Will be a portion here, a portion there,
Of this or that thing or some other thing
That has a patent and intrinsical
Equivalence in those egregious shillings.
And yet he knows, God help him! Tell me, now,
If ever there was anything let loose
On earth by gods or devils heretofore

Like this mad, careful, proud, indifferent Shakespeare!
Where was it, if it ever was? By heaven,
'Twas never yet in Rhodes or Pergamon—
In Thebes or Nineveh, a thing like this!
No thing like this was ever out of England;
And that he knows. I wonder if he cares.
Perhaps he does. . . . O Lord, that House in Stratford!

NEW ENGLAND

Here where the wind is always north-north-east
And children learn to walk on frozen toes,
Wonder begets an envy of all those
Who boil elsewhere with such a lyric yeast
Of love that you will hear them at a feast
Where demons would appeal for some repose,
Still clamoring where the chalice overflows
And crying wildest who have drunk the least.

Passion is here a soilure of the wits,
We're told, and Love a cross for them to bear;
Joy shivers in the corner where she knits
And Conscience always has the rocking-chair,
Cheerful as when she tortured into fits
The first cat that was ever killed by Care.

THE GIFT OF GOD

Blessed with a joy that only she
Of all alive shall ever know,
She wears a proud humility
For what it was that willed it so,—
That her degree should be so great
Among the favored of the Lord
That she may scarcely bear the weight
Of her bewildering reward.

As one apart, immune, alone,
Or featured for the shining ones,
And like to none that she has known
Of other women's other sons,—

The firm fruition of her need,
He shines anointed; and he blurs
Her vision, till it seems indeed
A sacrilege to call him hers.

She fears a little for so much
Of what is best, and hardly dares
To think of him as one to touch
With aches, indignities, and cares;
She sees him rather at the goal,
Still shining; and her dream foretells
The proper shining of a soul
Where nothing ordinary dwells.

Perchance a canvass of the town
Would find him far from flags and shouts,
And leave him only the renown
Of many smiles and many doubts;
Perchance the crude and common tongue
Would havoc strangely with his worth;
But she, with innocence unwrung,
Would read his name around the earth.

And others, knowing how this youth
Would shine, if love could make him great,
When caught and tortured for the truth
Would only writhe and hesitate;
While she, arranging for his days
What centuries could not fulfill,
Transmutes him with her faith and praise,
And has him shining where she will.

She crowns him with her gratefulness,
And says again that life is good;
And should the gift of God be less
In him than in her motherhood,
His fame, though vague, will not be small,
As upward through her dream he fares,
Half clouded with a crimson fall
Of roses thrown on marble stairs.

THE PRODIGAL SON

You are not merry, brother. Why not laugh,
As I do, and acclaim the fatted calf?
For, unless ways are changing here at home,
You might not have it if I had not come.
And were I not a thing for you and me
To execrate in anguish, you would be
As indigent a stranger to surprise,
I fear, as I was once, and as unwise.
Brother, believe as I do, it is best
For you that I'm again in the old nest—
Draggled, I grant you, but your brother still,
Full of good wine, good viands, and good will.
You will thank God, some day, that I returned,
And may be singing for what you have learned,
Some other day; and one day you may find
Yourself a little nearer to mankind.
And having hated me till you are tired,
You will begin to see, as if inspired,
It was fate's way of educating us.
Remembering then when you were venomous,
You will be glad enough that I am gone,
But you will know more of what's going on;
For you will see more of what makes it go,
And in more ways than are for you to know.
We are so different when we are dead,
That you, alive, may weep for what you said;
And I, the ghost of one you could not save,
May find you planting lentils on my grave.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Edgar Lee Masters was born at Garnett, Kansas, August 23, 1869, of Puritan and pioneering stock. When he was still a boy, the family moved to Illinois, where, after desultory schooling, he studied law in his father's office at Lewiston. For a year he practiced with his father and then went to Chicago, where he became a successful attorney.

Before going to Chicago, Masters had composed a quantity of rhymed verse in traditional forms on traditional themes; by

the time he was twenty-four he had written about four hundred poems, revealing the result of wide reading and betraying the influence of Poe, Keats, Shelley and Swinburne. His work, previous to the publication of *Spoon River Anthology*, was derivative and undistinguished. In 1895 he wrote a blank verse play on Benedict Arnold. In 1898 he published *A Book of Verses*, a selection of some sixty of the early four hundred. In 1902 *Maximilian*, another blank verse play, appeared, causing no more comment than the others. Nothing daunted, Masters published several volumes in rapid succession (three books of poetry appearing, under various pseudonyms, between 1905 and 1912), *The New Star Chamber and Other Essays* (1904), *Blood of the Prophets* (1905), *Althea*, a play (1907), *The Trifler*, another play (1908).

In 1914, Masters, at the suggestion of his friend, William Marion Reedy, turned from his preoccupation with classic subjects and began to draw upon the life he knew for those concise records which made him famous. Taking as his model *The Greek Anthology*, which Reedy had pressed upon him, Masters evolved *Spoon River Anthology*, that astonishing assemblage of over two hundred self-inscribed epitaphs, in which the dead of a middle Western town are supposed to have written the truth about themselves. Through these frank revelations, many of them interrelated, the village is recreated for us; it lives again, unvarnished and typical, with all its intrigues, hypocrisies, feuds, martyrdoms and occasional exaltations. The monotony of existence in a drab township, the defeat of ideals, the struggle toward higher goals are synthesized in these crowded pages. All moods and all manner of voices are heard here—even Masters', who explains the reason for his medium and the selection of his form through "Petit, the Poet."

The success of the volume was extraordinary. (See Preface.) With every new attack (and its frankness continued to make fresh enemies) its readers increased; it was imitated, parodied, reviled as "a piece of yellow journalism"; hailed as "an American Comédie Humaine." Finally, after the storm of controversy, it has taken its place as a landmark in American literature.

With *Spoon River Anthology* Masters arrived—and left. He went back to his first rhetorical style, resurrecting many of his earlier trifles, reprinting dull echoes of Tennyson, imitations of Shelley, archaic paraphrases in the manner of Swinburne. Yet though none of Masters' subsequent volumes can be compared to his masterpiece, all of them contain examples of the same straightforwardness, the stubborn searching that intensified his best-known characterizations.

Songs and Satires (1916) contains the startling "All Life in a

Life" and the gravely moving "Silence." *The Great Valley* (1916) is packed with echoes and a growing dependence on Browning. In *Toward the Gulf* (1918), the Browning influence predominates, although there are such splendid individual monologues as "The World Saver," "St. Deseret" and "Front the Ages with a Smile." *Starved Rock* (1919), *Domesday Book* (1920) and *The New Spoon River* (1924) are, like all Masters' later books, queerly assembled mixtures of good, bad and derivative verse in which, though the aim is cosmic, the language is pretentious and prosy. These volumes prepared us for the novels which, in their mixture of sharp concept and dull writing, were as uneven as his verse. *The Fate of the Jury* (1929) is a continuation of *Domesday Book* with its mechanics suggested by *The Ring and the Book*, large in outline, feeble in detail. And yet, for all this poet's borrowings, in spite of his repetitions and disillusions, Masters' work is a continual if irritable quest for some key to the mystery of truth and mastery of life. And there is always that milestone, the original *Spoon River Anthology*.

PETIT, THE POET

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel—
Faint iambics that the full breeze wakens—
But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus.
Ballades by the score with the same old thought:
The snows and the roses of yesterday are vanished;
And what is love but a rose that fades?
Life all around me here in the village:
Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
Courage, constancy, heroism, failure—
All in the loom, and, oh, what patterns!
Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers—
Blind to all of it all my life long.
Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
Tick, tick, tick, what little iambics,
While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines!

LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.

One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

ANNE RUTLEDGE[1]

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music:
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

SILENCE

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,

[1] See pages 105, 163, 333, 334, 349, 354, 467.

And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence for which music alone finds the word,
And the silence of the woods before the winds of spring begin,
And the silence of the sick
When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young.
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,
And the silence of a deep peace of mind,
And the silence of an embittered friendship,
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
And the silence of the gods who understand each other without speech,

There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and wife.
There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.
There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blessèd Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrow, all hope.
And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

STEPHEN CRANE

Stephen Crane, whose literary career was one of the most meteoric in American letters, was born in Newark, New Jersey, November 1, 1871. After taking a partial course at Lafayette College, he entered journalism at sixteen and, until the time of his death, was a reporter and writer of newspaper sketches. When he died prematurely, at the age of thirty, he had ten printed volumes to his credit, two more announced for publication, and two others which were appearing serially.

Crane's most famous novel, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), was a *tour de force,* written when he was twenty-two years old. What is even more astonishing is the fact that this detailed description of blood and battlefields was written by a civilian far from the scene of conflict. This novel (Crane's second) was an instantaneous and international success. *The Atlantic Monthly* pronounced it "great enough to set a new fashion in literature"; H. G. Wells, speaking of its influence in England, said Crane was "the first expression of the opening mind of a new period . . . a record of intensity beyond all precedent."

Crane's other books, although less powerful than *The Red Badge of Courage,* are scarcely less vivid. *The Open Boat* (1898) and *The Monster* (1899) are full of an intuitive wisdom and a passionate sensitivity that caused Wells to exclaim, "The man who can call these 'brilliant fragments' would reproach Rodin for not 'completing' his fragments."

At various periods in Crane's brief career, he experimented in verse, seeking to find new effects in unrhymed lines, a new acuteness of vision. The results were embodied in two volumes of unusual poetry—*The Black Riders* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899), lines that strangely anticipated the Imagists and the epigrammatic free verse that followed fifteen years later. Acidulous and biting, these elliptical concisions were unappreciated in his day; Crane's suggestive verse has not yet received its due in an age which employs its very technique. But it was forty years before Emily Dickinson won her rightful audience, and a quarter of a century passed before a publisher risked a *Complete Works of Stephen Crane.* It was not until 1930 that a *Collected Poems* appeared.

Besides novels, short stories and poems, Crane was writing, at the time of his death, descriptions of the world's great battles for *Lippincott's Magazine;* his droll *Whilomville Stories* for boys were appearing in *Harper's Monthly,* and he was beginning a series of similar stories for girls. It is more than probable that this feverish energy of production aggravated the illness that caused Crane's death. He reached his refuge in the Black Forest only to die at the journey's end, June 5, 1900.

I SAW A MAN

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
"It is futile," I said,
"You can never—"

"You lie," he cried,
And ran on.

THE WAYFARER

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
"Ha," he said,
"I see that no one has passed here
In a long time."
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
"Well," he mumbled at last,
"Doubtless there are other roads."

HYMN

A slant of sun on dull brown walls,
A forgotten sky of bashful blue.

Toward God a mighty hymn,
A song of collisions and cries,
Rumbling wheels, hoof-beats, bells,
Welcomes, farewells, love-calls, final moans,
Voices of joy, idiocy, warning, despair,
The unknown appeals of brutes,
The chanting of flowers,
The screams of cut trees,
The senseless babble of hens and wise men—
A cluttered incoherency that says to the stars:
"O God, save us!"

THE BLADES OF GRASS

In Heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
"What did you do?"
Then all save one of the little blades

Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.

Presently, God said,
"And what did you do?"
The little blade answered, "Oh, my Lord,
Memory is bitter to me,
For, if I did good deeds,
I know not of them."
Then God, in all his splendor,
Arose from his throne.
"Oh, best little blade of grass!" he said.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM

I met a seer.
He held in his hands
The book of wisdom.
"Sir," I addressed him,
"Let me read."
"Child—" he began.
"Sir," I said,
"Think not that I am a child,
For already I know much
Of that which you hold;
Aye, much."

He smiled.
Then he opened the book
And held it before me.
Strange that I should have grown so suddenly blind.

THE CANDID MAN

Forth went the candid man
And spoke freely to the wind—
When he looked about him he was in a far strange country.

Forth went the candid man
And spoke freely to the stars—
Yellow light tore sight from his eyes.

"My good fool," said a learned bystander,
"Your operations are mad."

"You are too candid," cried the candid man.
And when his stick left the head of the learned bystander
It was two sticks.

THE HEART

In the desert
I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hands,
And ate of it.
I said, "Is it good, friend?"
"It is bitter—bitter," he answered;
"But I like it
Because it is bitter,
And because it is my heart."

EDWIN FORD PIPER

Edwin Ford Piper was born at Auburn, Nebraska, February 8, 1871, and literally grew up in the saddle. In 1893 he entered the University of Nebraska, from which he received an A.B. in 1897 and an A.M. in 1900. He studied at Harvard (1903-4), was one of the editors of *The Kiote* (a magazine published from 1898 to 1902 in Lincoln, Nebraska), and, since 1905, has been an instructor of English at the State University of Iowa.

Piper's *Barbed Wire and Other Poems* (1918) is saturated with the color of his environment. His later poems are equally vivid and racy. "Sweetgrass Range" (with its self-acknowledged debt to Burns' "Rattlin' Roarin' Willie") and "Bindlestiff" are fresh evidences of this author's creative interest in ballads and folk-lore.

BINDLESTIFF

Oh, the lives of men, lives of men,
In pattern-molds be run;
But there's you, and me, and Bindlestiff—
And remember Mary's Son.

At dawn the hedges and the wheel-ruts ran
Into brightening sky. The grass bent low
With shimmering dew, and many a late wild rose
Unrolled the petals from its odorous heart
While birds held tuneful gossip. Suddenly,
Each bubbling trill and whistle hid away
As from a hawk; the fragrant silence heard
Only the loving stir of little leaves;
Then a man's baritone broke roughly in:

I've gnawed my crust of moldy bread,
Skimmed my mulligan stew;
Laid beneath the barren hedge—
Sleety night-winds blew.

Slanting rain chills my bones,
Sun bakes my skin;
Rocky road for my limping feet,
Door where I can't go in.

Above the hedgerow floated filmy smoke
From the hidden singer's fire. Once more the voice:

I used to burn the mules with the whip
When I worked on the grading gang;
But the boss was a crook and he docked my pay—
Some day that boss will hang.

I used to live in a six by nine,
Try to save my dough—
It's a bellyful of the chaff of life,
Feet that up and go.

The mesh of leafy branches rustled loud,
Into the road slid Bindlestiff. You've seen
The like of the traveler: gaunt humanity
In stained and broken coat, with untrimmed hedge
Of rusty beard and curling sunburnt hair;
His hat, once white, a dull uncertain cone;
His leathery hands and cheeks, his bright blue eyes
That always see new faces and strange dogs;
His mouth that laughs at life and at himself.

Sometimes they shut you up in jail—
Dark, and a filthy cell;
I hope the fellows built them jails
Find 'em down in hell.

But up above, you can sleep outdoors—
Feed you like a king;
You never have to saw no wood,
Only job is sing.

The tones came mellower, as unevenly
The tramp limped off trailing the hobo song:

Good-by, farewell to Omaha,
K. C., and Denver, too;
Put my foot on the flying freight,
Going to ride her through.

Bindlestiff topped a hillock, against the sky
Showed stick and bundle with his extra shoes
Jauntily dangling. Bird to bird once more
Made low sweet answer; in the wild rose cups
The bee found yellow meal; all softly moved
The white and purple morning-glory bells
As on the gently rustling hedgetop leaves
The sun's face rested. Bindlestiff was gone.

Oh, the lives of men, lives of men,
In pattern-molds be run;
But there's you, and me, and Bindlestiff—
And remember Mary's Son.

SWEETGRASS RANGE

Come sell your pony, cowboy—
Sell your pony to me;
Braided bridle and your puncher saddle,
And spend your money free.

"If I should sell my pony,
And ride the range no more,
Nail up my hat and my silver spurs
Above my shanty door;

"And let my door stand open wide
To the snow and the rain and sun;
And bury me under the green sweetgrass
Where you hear the river run."

As I came down the sweetgrass range
And by the cabin door,
I heard a singing in the early dusk
Along the river shore;

I heard a singing to the early stars,
And the tune of a pony's feet.
The joy of the riding singer
I never shall forget.

T. A. DALY

Thomas Augustine Daly was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 28, 1871. He attended Villanova College and Fordham University (1889), leaving there at the end of his sophomore year to become a newspaper man. Since 1891 he has been on the staff of various Philadelphia journals, writing reviews, editorials, travel-notes and, chiefly, running the columns in which his verse originally appeared.

Canzoni (1906) and *Carmina* (1909) contain the best known of Daly's varied dialect verse. Although he has written in half a dozen different idioms including "straight" English (*vide Songs of Wedlock*, 1916), his half-humorous, half-pathetic interpretations of the Irish and Italian immigrants are his *forte*. "Mia Carlotta" and "Between Two Loves" rank with the best dialect rhyming of the period; "The Song of the Thrush," though less laugh-provoking, is a more personal communication.

Seldom descending to caricature, Daly exhibits the foibles of his characters without exploiting them; even the lightest passages in *McAroni Ballads* (1919) are done with delicacy and a not too sentimental appreciation. Less popular than Riley or Dunbar, Daly is more skillful and versatile than either; his range and quality are comparable to Field's.

THE SONG OF THE THRUSH

Ah! the May was grand this mornin'!
Shure, how could I feel forlorn in

Such a land, when tree and flower tossed their kisses to the breeze?
Could an Irish heart be quiet
While the Spring was runnin' riot,
An' the birds of free America were singin' in the trees?
In the songs that they were singin'
No familiar note was ringin',
But I strove to imitate them an' I whistled like a lad.
Oh, my heart was warm to love them
For the very newness of them—
For the ould songs that they helped me to forget—an' I was glad.

So I mocked the feathered choir
To my hungry heart's desire,
An' I gloried in the comradeship that made their joy my own.
Till a new note sounded, stillin'
All the rest. A thrush was trillin'!
Ah, the thrush I left behind me in the fields about Athlone!
Where, upon the whitethorn swayin',
He was minstrel of the Mayin',
In my days of love an' laughter that the years have laid at rest;
Here again his notes were ringin'!
But I'd lost the heart for singin'—
Ah, the song I could not answer was the one I knew the best.

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da people dey talka, "how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seely young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seely young girls for da "mash,"
But notta—
You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

BETWEEN TWO LOVES

I gotta lov' for Angela,
I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gonna do?

O! Angela ees pretta girl,
She gotta hair so black, so curl,
An' teeth so white as anytheeng.
An' O! she gotta voice to seeng,
Dat mak' your hearta feel eet must
Jump up an' dance or eet weel bust.
An' alla time she seeng, her eyes
Dey smila like Italia's skies,
An' makin' flirtin' looks at you—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

Carlotta ees no gotta song,
But she ees twice so big an' strong
As Angela, an' she no look
So beautiful—but she can cook.
You oughta see her carry wood!
I tal you w'at, eet do you good.

When she ees be som'body's wife
She worka hard, you bat my life!
She never gattin' tired, too—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

O! my! I weesh dat Angela
Was strong for carry wood,
Or else Carlotta gotta song
An' looka pretta good.
I gotta lov' for Angela,
I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gonna do?

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

James Weldon Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1871, and was educated at Atlanta University and, later, at Columbia University. Even as an undergraduate he tried to support himself by writing; after graduation, he and his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, became known for their successful contributions to vaudeville and the musical comedy stage. He served seven years as United States Consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua. In 1915 his English version of the libretto of *Goyescas*, the Spanish grand opera, was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

Johnson's *Fifty Years and Other Poems* (1918) contains much that is merely meretricious and facile versifying. But, half buried in the midst of colorless clichés, there is not only the humor but the stern pathos which is characteristic of the Negro as singer. "The Creation," which followed, is as large in conception as it is appealing in naïveté. The quality of the stirring folk-tunes, such moving melodies as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Nobody Knows," breathe through the best of his lines. They capture some of that magic which he, with his brother, Rosamond Johnson, conjured up in the two collections of Negro Spirituals in 1925 and 1926.

In 1927, Johnson published his most important work, *God's Trombones*. Purporting to be seven Negro sermons in verse, Johnson communicated the sonorous mouth-filling periods, the fusion of tropical idioms with Bible English, the blaring, rambling but exalted stuff of "Noah Built the Ark" and "Go Down, Death."

Besides his creative work (Johnson is also the author of *The*

Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man), he has done many services for his race, not the least important of which is his preparation and editing of *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922).

THE CREATION

(*A Negro Sermon*)

And God stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said,
"*I'm lonely—*
I'll make me a world."

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said, "*That's good!*"

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands,
And God rolled the light around in His hands,
Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered up in a shining ball
And flung against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.
Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And God said, "*That's good!*"

Then God himself stepped down—
And the sun was on His right hand,
And the moon was on His left;
The stars were clustered about His head,

And the earth was under His feet.
And God walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.

Then He stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas;
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings flashed;
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled;
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pine-tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms;
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared,
And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said, "*Bring forth! Bring forth!*"
And quicker than God could drop His hand,
Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds
Swam the rivers and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings,
And God said, "*That's good!*"

Then God walked around
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,

And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said, "*I'm lonely still.*"

Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, "*I'll make me a man!*"

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty,
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand—
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;
Then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in 1872 at Dayton, Ohio, the son of negro slaves. He was, before and after he began to write his interpretative verse, an elevator-boy. He tried newspaper work unsuccessfully and, in 1899, was given a position in the Library of Congress at Washington, D. C.

Although Dunbar wrote several volumes of short stories and two novels, he was most at home in his verse. Even here, his best work is not those "literary English" pieces by which he set such store, but the racy rhymes written in negro dialect, alternately tender and mocking. Dunbar's first collection, *Lyrics of Lowly Life*

(1896), contains many of his most characteristic poems. In an introduction, in which mention was made of the octoroon Dumas and the great Russian poet Pushkin, who was a mulatto, William Dean Howells wrote, "So far as I could remember, Paul Dunbar was the first man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the Negro life esthetically and express it lyrically. . . . His brilliant and unique achievement was to have studied the American Negro objectively, and to have represented him as he found him—with humor, with sympathy, and yet with what the reader must instinctively feel to be entire truthfulness." Allowance must be made for the overcordiality of Howells. In any case, Dunbar was the precursor of those Negro poets who, turning away from sentimentality, genuinely expressed the Negro.

Lyrics of the Hearthside (1899) and *Lyrics of Love and Laughter* (1903) are two other volumes full of folk-stuff. And though the final *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (1905) is less original, being crowded with echoes of all kinds of poetry from the songs of Robert Burns to the childhood rhymes of J. W. Riley, it contains a few of Dunbar's least known but keenest interpretations.

Since the original publications, various "gift-book editions" of his work have appeared, and his shorter poems have been set to music by dozens of composers.

Dunbar died in the city of his birth, Dayton, Ohio, February 10, 1916.

THE TURNING OF THE BABIES IN THE BED

Woman's sho' a cur'ous critter, an' dey ain't no doubtin' dat.
She's a mess o' funny capahs f'om huh slippahs to huh hat.
Ef yo' tries to un'erstan' huh, an' yo' fails, des' up an' say:
"D' ain't a bit o' use to try to un'erstan' a woman's way."

I don' mean to be complainin', but I's jes' a-settin' down
Some o' my own obserwations, w'en I cas' my eye eroun'.
Ef yo' ax me fu' to prove it, I ken do it mighty fine,
Fu' dey ain't no bettah 'zample den dis ve'y wife o' mine.

In de ve'y hea't o' midnight, w'en I's sleepin' good an' soun',
I kin hyeah a so't o' rustlin' an' somebody movin' 'roun'.
An' I say, "Lize, whut yo' doin'?" But she frown an' shek huh haid,
"Hesh yo' mouf, I's only tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

"Don' yo' know a chile gits restless, layin' all de night one way?
An' yo' got to kind o' 'range him sev'al times befo' de day?
So de little necks won't worry, an' de little backs won't break;
Don' yo' t'ink 'cause chillun's chillun dey haint got no pain an' ache."

So she shakes 'em, an' she twists 'em, an' she tu'ns 'em 'roun' erbout,
'Twell I don' see how de chillun evah keeps f'om hollahin' out.
Den she lif's 'em up head down'ards, so's dey won't git livah-grown,
But dey snoozes des' ez peaceful ez a liza'd on a stone.

W'en hit's mos' nigh time fu' wakin' on de dawn o' jedgement day,
Seems lak I kin hyeah ol' Gab'iel lay his trumpet down an' say,
"Who dat walkin' 'roun' so easy, down on earf ermong de dead?"—
'Twill be Lizy up a-tu'nin' of de chillun in de bed.

A COQUETTE CONQUERED

Yes, my ha't's ez ha'd ez stone—
Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.
No; I ain't gwine change my min';
Ain't gwine ma'y you—nuffin' de kin'.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?
Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?
Oh, you needn't mou'n an' cry—
I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! What you got?
Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!
Huh! Yo' sass do sholy beat—
Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?
Looks des lak a little shoat.
'Tain't no possum? Bless de Lamb!
Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!

Gin it to me; whut you say?
Ain't you sma't! Oh, go 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice;
But you ax too big a price.

Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
Come back, Sam; now whah's you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's mine!

DISCOVERED

Seen you down at chu'ch las' night,
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
What I mean? Oh, dat's all right,
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
You was sma't ez sma't could be,
But you couldn't hide f'om me.
Ain't I got two eyes to see!
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful keen;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Evahthing you done, I seen;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,
When he got outside de do'—
Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Say now, honey, wa'd he say?—
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Keep yo' secrets—dat's yo' way—
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Won't tell me, an' I'm yo' pal!
I'm gwine tell his othah gal,—
Know huh, too; huh name is Sal.
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Leonora Speyer was born in Washington, D. C., in 1872. Her mother was of New England stock, her father was Count Ferdinand von Stosch, a Prussian nobleman who fought for the Union in the Civil War, became an American citizen, lived and died here. As a girl, Leonora von Stosch was a professional violinist, playing with Nikisch, Seidl and other famous conductors. Later, she married Sir Edgar Speyer who, before the World War, did much to bring modern European music to England. Since 1915, Mrs. Speyer has lived in New York City.

Although her husband had always written playlets for the entertainment of the family and had published a German translation of Keats' poems, Leonora Speyer had never written until 1915. For five years after that date, her verse appeared in various magazines and attracted no little attention. Her first volume, *A Canopic Jar*, appeared in 1921. Much of it was tentative and fumbling, much of it oversweet. But there was something clear and definite in such sonnets as "The Ladder" and even some of the free verse had a distinctly personal turn. This pleasant impression was strengthened by Mrs. Speyer's subsequent work. The later poems (from which the group here reprinted has been selected) show a firmer hand, a surer use of material. Her second volume, *Fiddler's Farewell* (1926), was given the Pulitzer Award in 1927, and disclosed a still cleaner craftsmanship; her spirited "Ballad of Doc Higgins" won second place in *The Nation's* poetry prize contest in 1926. Such poems as "Swans," "Early," and "Fido" combine no small degree of fancy and fine-edged wit.

EARLY

This gray hour robs the hills of green,
But not of strength and not of height;
And not of sky the clouds between.

Into the dawn a cuckoo calls
(Sly bird among the dripping trees),
At vague, impassive intervals.

The swifts fly lower than the boughs,
With little, creaking, busy cries;
A sound of water ripples, flows,

Beyond the garden and the gate,
And down the road and through the town
(Small mountain stream in shallow spate)—

And day is here: its silver plan
Inexorable, is not disclosed,
Is not discussed with any man.

Only to those who lie awake
It yields blunt promises of rain,
Which it may break, which it may break!

FIDO

She made a pet of grief,
Trained it and taught it many a trick:
It begged and fetched and carried,
Hid, waiting to be found,
Or played at being dead
(Lying limp-heaped upon the ground);
Ran by her side,
Lay warm within her bed;
And on her heart immoderately was fed.

Grief was the lady's pride
(A jealous brute at best);
How it would growl and snap
At any joy that dared draw near,
Leaping upon her lap,
Teeth bared. . . . She'd frown
A little wistfully and say,
"Bad doggy, down!
My dear . . . my dear . . .
Sweet pest. . . ."
And hold the sly head closer to her breast.

NEW EXCAVATIONS

(*Pompeii*)

A workman with a spade in half a day
Can push two thousand lagging years away;
See, how the tragic villas, one by one,
Like drowsy lizards, creep into the sun.

SWANS

With wings held close and slim neck bent,
Along dark water scarcely stirred,
Floats, shimmering and indolent,
The alabaster bird.

Its mate floats near, the lovely one;
They lie like snow, cool flake on flake,
Mild breast on breast of dimmer swan
Dim-mirrored in the lake.

They glide . . . and glides that white embrace,
Shy bird to bird, with never a sound;
Thus leaned Narcissus toward his face,
Leaned lower till he drowned.

Leda leaned thus, subdued and spent
Beneath those vivid wings of love . . .
Along the lake, proud, indolent,
The vast birds scarcely move.

Silence is wisdom. Then how wise
Are these whose song is but their knell!
A god did well to choose this guise.
Truly a god did well.

PROTEST IN PASSING

This house of flesh was never loved of me,
Though I have known much love beneath its roof,
Always was I a guest who stood aloof,
Loth to accept such hospitality.
When the house slumbered, how I woke! for then
I knew of half-escapes along the night,
But now there comes a safer, swifter flight:
I go; nor need endure these rooms again.

I have been cowed too long by closed-in walls,
By masonry of muscle, blood and bone;
This quaking house of flesh that was my own,
High roof-tree of the heart, see how it falls!
I go . . . but pause upon the threshold's rust,
To shake from off my feet my own dead dust.

Guy Wetmore Carryl, son of Charles Edward Carryl (see page 89), was born in New York City, March 4, 1873. He was graduated from Columbia University in 1895, was editor of *Munsey's Magazine*, 1895-6, and, during the time he lived abroad (from 1897 to 1902), was the foreign representative of various American publications.

As a writer of prose he was received with no little acclaim; his stories, *The Transgression of Andrew Vane* (1902) and *Zut and Other Parisians* (1903), held the attention of a restless reading public. But it was as a writer of light verse that Carryl became preëminent. Inheriting a remarkable technical gift from his father, young Carryl soon surpassed him as well as other rivals in the field of brilliantly rhymed, adroitly turned burlesques.

Although he wrote several serious poems which were collected in the posthumously published *The Garden of Years*, 1904, Carryl's most characteristic work is to be found in his perversions of the parables of Aesop, *Fables for the Frivolous* (1898); the topsy-turvy interpretations of nursery rhymes, *Mother Goose for Grownups* (1900); and the fantastic variations on fairy tales in *Grimm Tales Made Gay* (1903)—all of them with a surprising (and punning) Moral attached. Even those who scorn the gymnastics of most light verse usually succumb to the ease with which Carryl overcomes seemingly impossible hazards in the rhyme-leaping fable of the fox and the raven or the appalling pun-juggling in the new version of Puss-in-Boots. He lacked only a Sullivan—and a sense of satire—to be called the Gilbert of America.

This extraordinary versifier died, before reaching the height of his power, at the age of thirty-one, in the summer of 1904.

HOW JACK FOUND THAT BEANS MAY GO BACK ON A CHAP

Without the slightest basis
For hypochondriasis
  A widow had forebodings which a cloud around her flung,
And with expression cynical
For half the day a clinical
  Thermometer she held beneath her tongue.

Whene'er she read the papers
She suffered from the vapors,
  At every tale of malady or accident she'd groan;

In every new and smart disease,
From housemaid's knee to heart disease,
She recognized the symptoms as her own!

She had a yearning chronic
To try each novel tonic,
Elixir, panacea, lotion, opiate, and balm;
And from a homeopathist
Would change to an hydropathist,
And back again, with stupefying calm!

She was nervous, cataleptic,
And anemic, and dyspeptic:
Though not convinced of apoplexy, yet she had her fears.
She dwelt with force fanatical
Upon a twinge rheumatical,
And said she had a buzzing in her ears!

Now all of this bemoaning
And this grumbling and this groaning
The mind of Jack, her son and heir, unconscionably bored.
His heart completely hardening,
He gave his time to gardening,
For raising beans was something he adored.

Each hour in accents morbid
This limp maternal bore bid
Her callous son affectionate and lachrymose good-bys.
She never granted Jack a day
Without some long "Alackaday!"
Accompanied by rolling of the eyes.

But Jack, no panic showing,
Just watched his beanstalk growing,
And twined with tender fingers the tendrils up the pole.
At all her words funereal
He smiled a smile ethereal,
Or sighed an absent-minded "Bless my soul!"

That hollow-hearted creature
Would never change a feature:
No tear bedimmed his eye, however touching was her talk.

She never fussed or flurried him,
The only thing that worried him
  Was when no bean-pods grew upon the stalk!

But then he wabbled loosely
His head, and wept profusely,
  And, taking out his handkerchief to mop away his tears,
Exclaimed: "It hasn't got any!"
He found this blow to botany
  Was sadder than were all his mother's fears.

The Moral is that gardeners pine
Whene'er no pods adorn the vine.
Of all sad words experience gleans
The saddest are: "It *might* have beans."
  (I did not make this up myself:
  'Twas in a book upon my shelf.
  It's witty, but I don't deny
  It's rather Whittier than I!)

THE SYCOPHANTIC FOX AND THE GULLIBLE RAVEN

A raven sat upon a tree,
  And not a word he spoke, for
His beak contained a piece of Brie,
  Or, maybe, it was Roquefort.
    We'll make it any kind you please—
    At all events it was a cheese.

Beneath the tree's umbrageous limb
  A hungry fox sat smiling;
He saw the raven watching him,
  And spoke in words beguiling:
    "*J'admire,*" said he, "*ton beau plumage,*"
    (The which was simply persiflage).

Two things there are, no doubt you know,
  To which a fox is used:
A rooster that is bound to crow,
  A crow that's bound to roost;
    And whichsoever he espies
    He tells the most unblushing lies.

"Sweet foul," he said, "I understand
You're more than merely natty,
I hear you sing to beat the band
And Adelina Patti.
Pray render with your liquid tongue
A bit from 'Götterdämmerung.'"

This subtle speech was aimed to please
The crow, and it succeeded;
He thought no bird in all the trees
Could sing as well as he did.
In flattery completely doused,
He gave the "Jewel Song" from "Faust."

But gravitation's law, of course,
As Isaac Newton showed it,
Exerted on the cheese its force,
And elsewhere soon bestowed it.
In fact, there is no need to tell
What happened when to earth it fell.

I blush to add that when the bird
Took in the situation
He said one brief, emphatic word,
Unfit for publication.
The fox was greatly startled, but
He only sighed and answered "Tut."

The Moral is: A fox is bound
To be a shameless sinner.
And also: When the cheese comes round
You know it's after dinner.
But (what is only known to few)
The fox is after dinner, too.

HOW A CAT WAS ANNOYED AND A POET WAS BOOTED

A poet had a cat.
There is nothing odd in that—
(I *might* make a little pun about the *Mews!*)

But what is really more
Remarkable, she wore
A pair of pointed patent-leather shoes.
And I doubt me greatly whether
You have heard the like of that:
Pointed shoes of patent-leather
On a cat!

His time he used to pass
Writing sonnets, on the grass—
(I *might* say something good on *pen* and *sward!*)
While the cat sat near at hand,
Trying hard to understand
The poems he occasionally roared.
(I myself possess a feline,
But when poetry I roar
He is sure to make a bee-line
For the door.)

The poet, cent by cent,
All his patrimony spent—
(I *might* tell how he went from *verse* to *worse!*)
Till the cat was sure she could,
By advising, do him good.
So addressed him in a manner that was terse:
"We are bound toward the scuppers,
And the time has come to act,
Or we'll both be on our uppers
For a fact!"

On her boot she fixed her eye,
But the boot made no reply—
(I *might* say: "Couldn't speak to save its *sole!*")
And the foolish bard, instead
Of responding, only read
A verse that wasn't bad upon the whole.
And it pleased the cat so greatly,
Though she knew not what it meant,
That I'll quote approximately
How it went:—

"If I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree"—
(I *might* put in: "I think I'd just as *leaf!*")
"Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough"—
Well, he'd plagiarized it bodily, in brief!
But that cat of simple breeding
Couldn't read the lines between,
So she took it to a leading
Magazine.

She was jarred and very sore
When they showed her to the door.
(I *might* hit off the *door* that was a *jar!*)
To the spot she swift returned
Where the poet sighed and yearned,
And she told him that he'd gone a little far.
"Your performance with this rhyme has
Made me absolutely sick,"
She remarked. "I think the time has
Come to kick!"

I could fill up half the page
With descriptions of her rage—
(I *might* say that she went a bit *too fur!*)
When he smiled and murmured: "Shoo!"
"There is one thing I can do!"
She answered with a wrathful kind of purr.
"You may shoe me, an it suit you,
But I feel my conscience bid
Me, as tit for tat, to boot you!"
(Which she did.)

The Moral of the plot
(Though I say it, as should not!)
Is: An editor is difficult to suit.
But again there're other times
When the man who fashions rhymes
Is a rascal, and a bully one to boot!

(Joseph) Trumbull Stickney was born June 20, 1874, at Geneva, Switzerland, of New England parents. In 1891 he entered Harvard and was graduated with high classical honors in 1895. Immediately thereafter, he went abroad, studying at the Sorbonne and College de France for seven years. The University of Paris gave him the Doctorat es Lettres, never before conferred on an American, for two scholarly theses in 1903, the critic Masqueray pronouncing his "*Les Sentences dans la Poesie Grecque*" one of the best modern studies of Hellenic literature. A few months later he returned to America, where he became instructor of Greek at Harvard University. Here his work was suddenly interrupted by death, caused by a tumor on the brain, and his verses were given to his friends with these words, "Here are my manuscripts. Do as you please with them." Stickney died at the age of thirty, October 11, 1904.

One year after his death, his friends, George Cabot Lodge, John Ellerton Lodge and William Vaughn Moody, edited his posthumous *Poems* (1905), a small and wholly forgotten volume, *Dramatic Verses*, having appeared in 1902. Stickney seems to have found no wider circle of readers than his restricted intimate one. The collections of the period have no record of him; Stedman's voluminous anthology does not even mention his name. Yet there can be no question but that Stickney was a representative poet of his generation, worthy to stand beside Moody, whose point of view as well as his rhetoric he shared. There is a note, however, in Stickney's poetry wholly unlike Moody's, a preoccupation with death that relates him—in spirit at least—to the later Jeffers. He spoke of divinely learning to suffer loneliness; his, he wrote, were the "wise denials." One of his lyrics significantly ends

> O let us yield to life's divinest charm
> That lured us thro' the blasted field of hope,
> Let us return to death.

Although his sonnets suffer from patches of a purple cast, they have vigor and imaginative individuality. Stickney was a poet whom, whatever his verbal defects, American literature could ill afford to lose so early.

"LIVE BLINDLY AND UPON THE HOUR"

Live blindly and upon the hour. The Lord,
Who was the Future, died full long ago.
Knowledge which is the Past is folly. Go,
Poor child, and be not to thyself abhorred.

Around thine earth sun-wingèd winds do blow
And planets roll; a meteor draws his sword;
The rainbow breaks his seven-colored chord
And the long strips of river-silver flow:
Awake! Give thyself to the lovely hours.
Drinking their lips, catch thou the dream in flight
About their fragile hairs' aërial gold.
Thou art divine, thou livest,—as of old
Apollo springing naked to the light,
And all his island shivered into flowers.

IN THE PAST

There lies a somnolent lake
Under a noiseless sky,
Where never the mornings break
Nor the evenings die.

Mad flakes of color
Whirl on its even face
Iridescent and streaked with pallor;
And, warding the silent place,

The rocks rise sheer and gray
From the sedgeless brink to the sky
Dull-lit with the light of pale half-day
Thro' a void space and dry.

And the hours lag dead in the air
With a sense of coming eternity
To the heart of the lonely boatman there:
That boatman am I,

I, in my lonely boat,
A waif on the somnolent lake,
Watching the colors creep and float
With the sinuous track of a snake.

Now I lean o'er the side
And lazy shades in the water see,
Lapped in the sweep of a sluggish tide
Crawled in from the living sea;

And next I fix mine eyes,
So long that the heart declines,
On the changeless face of the open skies
Where no star shines;

And now to the rocks I turn,
To the rocks, around
That lie like walls of a circling urn
Wherein lie bound

The waters that feel my powerless strength
And meet my homeless oar
Laboring over their ashen length
Never to find a shore.

But the gleam still skims
At times on the somnolent lake,
And a light there is that swims
With the whirl of a snake;

And tho' dead be the hours in the air,
And dayless the sky,
The heart is alive of the boatman there:
That boatman am I.

AGE IN YOUTH

From far she's come, and very old,
And very soiled with wandering.
The dust of seasons she has brought
Unbidden to this field of Spring.

She's halted at the log-barred gate.
The May-day waits, a tangled spill
Of light that weaves and moves along
The daisied margin of the hill,

Where Nature bares her bridal heart,
And on her snowy soul the sun
Languors desirously and dull,
An amorous pale vermilion.

She's halted, propped her rigid arms,
With dead big eyes she drinks the west;
The brown rags hang like clotted dust
About her, save her withered breast.

A very soilure of a dream
Runs in the furrows of her brow,
And with a crazy voice she croons
An ugly catch of long ago.

But look! Along the molten sky
There runs strange havoc of the sun.
"What a strange sight this is," she says,
"I'll cross the field, I'll follow on."

The bars are falling from the gate.
The meshes of the meadow yield;
And trudging sunsetward she draws
A journey thro' the daisy field.

The daisies shudder at her hem.
Her dry face laughs with flowery light;
An aureole lifts her soiled gray hair:
"I'll on," she says, "to see this sight."

In the rude math her torn shoe mows
Juices of trod grass and crushed stalk
Mix with a soiled and earthy dew,
With smear of petals gray as chalk.

The Spring grows sour along her track;
The winy airs of amethyst
Turn acid. "Just beyond the ledge,"
She says, "I'll see the sun at rest."

And to the tremor of her croon,
Her old, old catch of long ago,
The newest daisies of the grass
She shreds and passes on below. . . .

The sun is gone where nothing is
And the black-bladed shadows war.
She came and passed, she passed along
That wet, black curve of scimitar.

In vain the flower-lifting morn
With golden fingers to uprear;
The weak Spring here shall pause awhile:
This is a scar upon the year.

"ALONE ON LYKAION"

Alone on Lykaion since man hath been
Stand on the height two columns, where at rest
Two eagles hewn of gold sit looking East
Forever; and the sun goes up between.
Far down around the mountain's oval green
An order keeps the falling stones abreast.
Below within the chaos last and least
A river like a curl of light is seen.
Beyond the river lies the even sea,
Beyond the sea another ghost of sky,—
O God, support the sickness of my eye
Lest the far space and long antiquity
Suck out my heart, and on this awful ground
The great wind kill my little shell with sound.

H. H. KNIBBS

Harry Herbert Knibbs was born at Niagara Falls, October 24, 1874. After a desultory schooling, he attended Harvard for three years when he was thirty-four. He wrote his first book, *Lost Farm Camp*, a novel, as a class exercise.

Half a dozen volumes followed, *Overland Red* (1914) and *Tang of Life* (1917) being the most popular. In 1911 Knibbs settled in Los Angeles, California, where he has lived ever since. *Temescal*, in many ways his best tale, appeared in 1925.

In *Riders of the Stars* (1916) and *Songs of the Trail* (1920) Knibbs carries on the tradition of Bret Harte and the Pike County Ballads. High-hearted verse this is, with more than an occasional flash of poetry. To the typical Western breeziness, Knibbs adds whimsicality, a rough-shod but nimble imagination. Knibbs, far

more accurately than Service, sings the rough-edged, horny-handed ballad of the pioneer; he is the singer of the ranch, the temporary camp, the uncertain trail.

THE VALLEY THAT GOD FORGOT

Out in the desert spaces, edged by a hazy blue,
Davison sought the faces of the long-lost friends he knew:
They were there, in the distance dreaming
Their dreams that were worn and old;
They were there, to his frenzied seeming,
Still burrowing down for gold.

Davison's face was leather; his mouth was a swollen blot,
His mind was a floating feather, in The Valley That God Forgot;
Wild as a dog gone loco,
Or sullen or meek, by turns,
He mumbled a "Poco! Poco!"
And whispered of pools and ferns.

Gold! Why his, for the finding! But water was never found
Save in deep caverns winding miles through the underground:
Cool, far, shadowy places
Edged by the mirrored trees,
When—Davison saw the faces!
And fear let loose his knees.

There was Shorty who owed him money, and Billing who bossed the crowd;
And Steve whom the boys called "Sunny," and Collins who talked so loud:
Miguel with the handsome daughter,
And the rustler, Ed McCray;
Five—and they begged for water,
And offered him gold, in pay.

Gold? It was never cheaper. And Davison shook his head:
"The price of a drink is steeper out here than in town," he said.

He laughed as they mouthed and muttered
Through lips that were cracked and dried;
The pulse in his ear-drum fluttered:
"I'm through with the game!" he cried.

"I'm through!" And he knelt and fumbled the cap of his dry canteen;
Then, rising, he swayed and stumbled into a black ravine:
His ghostly comrades followed,
For Davison's end was near,
And a shallow grave they hollowed,
When up from it, cool and clear

Bubbled the water—hidden a pick-stroke beneath the sand;
Davison, phantom-ridden, scooped with a shaking hand . . .
Davison swears they made it,
The Well where we drank today.
Davison's game? He played it
And won—so the town-folk say:

Called it The Morning-Glory—near those abandoned stamps,
And Davison's crazy story was told in a hundred camps:
Time and the times have tamed it,
His yarn—and this desert spot,
But I'm strong for the man who named it,
The Valley That God Forgot.

ROLL A ROCK DOWN

Oh, out in the West where the riders are ready,
They sing an old song and they tell an old tale,
And its moral is plain: Take it easy, go steady,
While riding a horse on the Malibu Trail.

It's a high, rocky trail with its switch-backs and doubles,
It has no beginning and never an end:
It's risky and rough and it's plumb full of troubles,
From Shifty—that's shale—up to Powder Cut Bend.

Old-timers will tell you the rangers who made it,
Sang "Roll A Rock Down," with a stiff upper lip,
And cussed all creation, but managed to grade it;
With a thousand-foot drop if a pony should slip.

Oh, the day it was wet and the sky it was cloudy,
The trail was as slick as an oil-rigger's pants,
When Ranger McCabe on his pony, Old Rowdy,
Came ridin' where walkin' was takin' a chance.

"Oh, Roll A Rock Down!" picks and shovels was clangin',
And Rowdy a-steppin' that careful and light,
When the edge it gave way and McCabe was left hangin'
Clean over the rim—with no bottom in sight.

I shook out a loop—bein' crowded for throwin';
I flipped a fair noose for a rope that was wet:
It caught just as Mac lost his holt and was goin',
And burned through my fingers: it's burnin' them yet.

For Ranger McCabe never knuckled to danger;
My pardner in camp, on the trail, or in town:
And he slid into glory, a true forest-ranger,
With: "Hell! I'm a-goin'! Just roll a rock down."

So, roll a rock down where a ranger is sleepin'
Aside of his horse below Powder Cut Bend:
I ride and I look where the shadows are creepin',
And roll a rock down—for McCabe was my friend.

I've sung you my song and I've told you my story,
And all that I ask when I'm done with the show,
Is, roll a rock down when I slide into glory,
And say that I went like a ranger should go.

ANNA HEMPSTEAD BRANCH

Anna Hempstead Branch was born at New London, Connecticut. She was graduated from Smith College in 1897 and has devoted herself to literature and social service ever since.

Her two chief volumes, *The Shoes That Danced* (1905) and

Rose of the Wind (1910), reveal the lyrist, but they show a singer who is less fanciful than philosophic. Often, indeed, Miss Branch weighs down her simple melodies with intellectuality; more often, she attains a high level of lyricism. Her lines are admirably condensed; rich in personal as well as poetic value, they maintain a high and austere level. A typical poem is "The Monk in the Kitchen," which, with its spiritual loveliness and verbal felicity, is a celebration of cleanness that gives order an almost mystical nobility and recalls George Herbert.

Although nothing she has ever written has attained the popularity of her shorter works, "Nimrod" has an epic sweep, a large movement which, within the greater curve, contains many moments of exalted imagery. The deeply religious feeling implicit in this work governs the author as person no less than as poet, Miss Branch having given a great part of her life to settlement work on the East Side of New York. "To a Dog" is more direct than is Miss Branch's wont; "The Monk in the Kitchen" is no less straightforward, though its metaphysics make it seem less forthright.

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo—I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air—
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.
But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings—
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flagstone
That my feet have trod upon—
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.
Into deep substance he reached, and lo!
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be,
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He required of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,
And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.
The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.

Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task.
And all were beautiful—but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace;
That when I saw I cried—"Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?"—And he said,
"When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid-air.
Nay—thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

WHILE LOVELINESS GOES BY

Sometimes when all the world seems gray and dun
And nothing beautiful, a voice will cry,
"Look out, look out! Angels are drawing nigh!"
Then my slow burdens leave me one by one,
And swiftly does my heart arise and run
Even like a child while loveliness goes by—
And common folk seem children of the sky,
And common things seem shapèd of the sun,
Oh, pitiful! that I who love them, must
So soon perceive their shining garments fade!
And slowly, slowly, from my eyes of trust
Their flaming banners sink into a shade!
While this earth's sunshine seems the golden dust
Slow settling from that radiant cavalcade.

TO A DOG

I

If there is no God for thee
Then there is no God for me

If He sees not when you share
With the poor your frugal fare,

Does not see you at a grave,
Every instinct bred to save;

As if you were the only one
Believing in a resurrection;

When you wait, as lovers do,
Watching till your friend comes true;

Does not reverence when you take
Angry words for love's sweet sake;

If his eye does not approve
All your faith and pain and love;

If the heart of justice fail
And is for you of no avail;

If there is no heaven for thee
Then there is no heaven for me.

II

If the Lord they tell us of
Died for men yet loves not love,

If from out His Paradise
He shuts the innocent and wise,

The gay, obedient, simple, good,
The docile ones, of friendly mood,

Those who die to save a friend
Heavenly faithful to the end;

If there is no cross for thee
Then there is no cross for me.

III

If its boughs reach not so high
That they bowed star and sky,

If its roots are not so sound
That they cleave the heavy ground,

If it thrills not through all Nature
Plunged through every living creature,

If its leaves do not enmesh
Every bit of groaning flesh,

If it strike no mighty spur
Through fang and claw and tooth and fur

Piercing tree and earth and stone,
Then indeed I stand alone.

Nothing less than this can save
Me, from out my fleshly grave,

Me, in whom such jungles are
Where the beasts go out to war.

If there is no God for thee
Then there is no God for me.

AMY LOWELL

Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, February 9, 1874, of a long line of noted publicists and poets, the first colonist (a Percival Lowell) arriving in Newburyport in 1637. James Russell Lowell was a cousin of her grandfather; Abbott Lawrence,

her mother's father, was minister to England; Percival Lowell, the astronomer who charted the conjectural canals on Mars, was a brother; and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, her other brother, was president of Harvard University.

Miss Lowell obtained her early education through private tuition and travel abroad. These European journeys were the background upon which much of Miss Lowell's later work was unconsciously woven; her visits to France, Egypt, Turkey and Greece bore fruit, many years later, in the exotic colors of her verse. As a young girl, she had vague aspirations toward being a writer; but it was not until 1902, when she was twenty-eight years old, that she definitely determined to be a poet. For eight years she served a rigorous and solitary apprenticeship, reading the classics of all schools, studying the technique of verse, exercising her verbal gifts—but never attempting to publish a single line. In 1910 her first verse was printed in *The Atlantic Monthly;* two years later her first book appeared.

This volume, *A Dome of Many-colored Glass* (1912), was a strangely unpromising first book. Subject and treatment were conventional; the influence of Keats and Tennyson was evident; the tone was soft and sentimental, without a trace of personality. It was a queer prologue to the vivid *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), which marked not only an extraordinary advance but a totally new individuality. This second volume contained many distinctive poems written in the usual forms, a score of pictorial pieces illustrating Miss Lowell's identification with the Imagists (see Preface) and, possibly most important from a technical standpoint, the first appearance in English of "polyphonic prose." Of this extremely flexible form, Miss Lowell, in an essay on John Gould Fletcher, wrote, " 'Polyphonic' means 'many-voiced,' and the form is so-called because it makes use of the 'voices' of poetry, namely: meter, *vers libre*, assonance, alliteration, rhyme and return. It employs every form of rhythm, even prose rhythm at times."

It was because of such experiments in form and technique that Miss Lowell first attracted attention and is still best known. But, beneath a preoccupation with theories and novelty of utterance, there was the skilled story-teller, who revivified history with creative excitement. *Men, Women and Ghosts* (1916) brims with this contagious vitality; it is richer in variety than its predecessors, swifter in movement. It is, in common with all of Miss Lowell's work, best in its portrayal of colors and sounds, of physical perceptions rather than the reactions of inner experience. She is, preëminently, the poet of the external world; her visual effects are as "hard and clear" as the most uncompromising Imagist

could desire. The colors with which her works are studded seem like bits of bright enamel; every leaf and flower has a lacquered brilliance. To compensate for the lack of the spirit's warmth, Miss Lowell feverishly agitates all she touches; nothing remains quiescent. Whether she writes about a fruit shop, or a flower-garden in Roxbury, or a windowful of red slippers, or a string quartet, or a Japanese print—everything flashes, leaps, startles, spins and burns with dynamic, almost savage, speed. Motion too often takes the place of emotion.

In *Can Grande's Castle* (1918) Miss Lowell achieves a broader line; the teller of stories, the bizarre decorator and the experimenter finally fuse. The poems in this volume are only four in number—four polyphonic prose-poems of unusual length, extraordinarily varied in their sense of amplitude and time. *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919) which followed is, in many ways, Miss Lowell's most personal revelation. Although there are pages devoted to the merely dazzling and grotesque, most of the poems are in a quieter key.

Legends (1921) is closely related to *Can Grande's Castle*. Here are eleven stories placed against seven different backgrounds. The first must be rated among Miss Lowell's most dazzling achievements: a *tour de force* with colors as strange and metallic as the scene it pictures. The next years were devoted to her Keats researches, the two volumes containing them being published just before her death.

Besides Miss Lowell's original poetry, she undertook many studies in foreign literatures; she made the English versions of the poems translated from the Chinese by Florence Ayscough in the vivid *Fir-Flower Tablets* (1921). She also wrote two volumes of critical essays: *Six French Poets* (1915) and *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), valuable aids to the student of contemporary literature. Two years after its publication she acknowledged the authorship of the anonymous *A Critical Fable* (1922), a modern sequel to James Russell Lowell's *A Fable for Critics*. Her monumental *John Keats*, an exhaustive biography and analysis of the poet in two volumes, appeared early in 1925.

For years Miss Lowell had been suffering from ill health; she had been operated upon several times, but her general condition as well as her continual desire to work, nullified the effects of the operations. In April, 1925, her condition became worse; she was forced to cancel a projected lecture trip through England and to cease all work. She died as the result of an unexpected paralytic stroke on May 12, 1925. Her death occasioned nation-wide tributes; the very journals which had ridiculed her during her life were loudest in praise. A few editorials maintained that her per-

sonality was more forceful and impressive than her work; the majority, however, agreed that hers was one of the most daring and picturesque figures in contemporary literature. Like all pioneers, she was the target of scorn and hostility; but, unlike most innovators, she lived to see her experiments rise from the limbo of ridicule to a definite place in their period.

Three posthumous volumes appeared at yearly intervals immediately after her death: *What's O'Clock* (1925) which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for that year, *East Wind* (1926), *Ballads for Sale* (1927). The first was arranged by the poet herself and includes such less experimental poems as "Meeting-House Hill" and "Lilacs" which are tart and native; the second is a set of dialect and somewhat overdramatized New England narratives; the third is a miscellaneous collection. Her qualities are epitomized in these three books and the fact that they show no particular advance upon the earlier "Patterns" is significant. Her brilliance, her command of the lacquered phrase and the glazed figure, her pyrotechnique which cause words to bloom and burst at the same moment as though issuing from firework flower-pots, her restless excitement provoking inanimate objects to a furious life of their own—these were characteristics recognizable from the first. In some of the new poems, the juxtaposition of the thing observed and the thing imagined ("Meeting-House Hill" is a particularly vivid example) is more than ordinarily surprising, but one is prepared for the verve and alacrity of upspringing colors, for the purposeful shifting and distortion of surfaces like the clash of planes in an agitated canvas.

It is here that Amy Lowell triumphed: in the visual world, in the reflection of reflections, in capturing the minute disturbances of light and movement. It has been said that, though a poet, she failed as a humanist, that she never touched the emotions because she never knew where to look for them. But this—contradicted by such poems as "Madonna of the Evening Flowers" and the ecstatic "In Excelsis"—is only true in the sense that emotion was not this poet's domain nor, except in a few instances, her concern. Fineness and *finesse* were her preoccupations, and her many volumes testify to a continually adroit craftsmanship.

A LADY

You are beautiful and faded,
Like an old opera tune
Played upon a harpsichord;
Or like the sun-flooded silks
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir.

In your eyes
Smolder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,
And the perfume of your soul
Is vague and suffusing,
With the pungence of sealed spice-jars.
Your half-tones delight me,
And I grow mad with gazing
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,
Which I cast at your feet.
Gather it up from the dust
That its sparkle may amuse you.

SOLITAIRE

When night drifts along the streets of the city,
And sifts down between the uneven roofs,
My mind begins to peek and peer.
It plays at ball in odd, blue Chinese gardens,
And shakes wrought dice-cups in Pagan temples
Amid the broken flutings of white pillars.
It dances with purple and yellow crocuses in its hair,
And its feet shine as they flutter over drenched grasses.
How light and laughing my mind is,
When all good folk have put out their bedroom candles,
And the city is still.

PATTERNS

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jeweled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train

Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.
Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whalebone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime-tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden-paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword-hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,
A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover.

Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer, Madam," said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown;
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;
He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim

That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

WIND AND SILVER

Greatly shining,
The Autumn moon floats in the thin sky;
And the fish-ponds shake their backs and flash their dragon scales
As she passes over them.

NIGHT CLOUDS

The white mares of the moon rush along the sky
Beating their golden hoofs upon the glass Heavens;
The white mares of the moon are all standing on their hind legs
Pawing at the green porcelain doors of the remote Heavens.
Fly, mares!
Strain your utmost,
Scatter the milky dust of stars,
Or the tiger sun will leap upon you and destroy you
With one lick of his vermilion tongue.

FREE FANTASIA ON JAPANESE THEMES

All the afternoon there has been a chirping of birds,
And the sun lies warm and still on the western sides of swollen branches,
There is no wind;
Even the little twigs at the ends of the branches do not move,
And the needles of the pines are solid
Bands of inarticulated blackness
Against the blue-white sky,
Still, but alert;
And my heart is still and alert,
Passive with sunshine,
Avid of adventure.

I would experience new emotions,
Submit to strange enchantments,
Bend to influences
Bizarre, exotic,
Fresh with burgeoning.
I would climb a sacred mountain
Struggle with other pilgrims up a steep path through pine-trees,
Above to the smooth, treeless slopes,
And prostrate myself before a painted shrine,
Beating my hands upon the hot earth,
Quieting my eyes upon the distant sparkle
Of the faint spring sea.

I would recline upon a balcony
In purple curving folds of silk,
And my dress should be silvered with a pattern
Of butterflies and swallows,
And the black band of my *obi*
Should flash with gold circular threads,
And glitter when I moved.
I would lean against the railing
While you sang to me of wars
Past and to come—
Sang, and played the samisen.
Perhaps I would beat a little hand drum

In time to your singing;
Perhaps I would only watch the play of light
Upon the hilt of your two swords.

I would sit in a covered boat,
Rocking slowly to the narrow waves of a river,
While above us, an arc of moving lanterns,
Curved a bridge,
A hiss of gold
Blooming out of darkness,
Rockets exploded,
And died in a soft dripping of colored stars.
We would float between the high trestles,
And drift away from other boats,
Until the rockets flared soundless,
And their falling stars hung silent in the sky,
Like wistaria clusters above the ancient entrance of a temple.

I would anything
Rather than this cold paper;
With outside, the quiet sun on the sides of burgeoning branches,
And inside, only my books.

A DECADE

When you came, you were like red wine and honey,
And the taste of you burnt my mouth with its sweetness.
Now you are like morning bread,
Smooth and pleasant.
I hardly taste you at all, for I know your savor;
But I am completely nourished.

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS

All day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.

Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.

I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums* of the Canterbury bells.

EVELYN RAY

No decent man will cross a field
Laid down to hay, until its yield

Is cut and cocked, yet there was the track
Going in from the lane and none coming back.

But that was afterwards; before,
The field was smooth as a sea off shore

On a shimmering afternoon, waist-high
With bent, and red top, and timothy.

Lush with oat grass and tall fescue,
And the purple green of Kentucky blue;

A noble meadow, so broad each way
It took three good scythes to mow in a day.

Just where the field broke into a wood
A knotted old catalpa stood,

And in the old catalpa-tree
A cat-bird sang immoderately.

The sky above him was round and big
And its center seemed just over his twig.

The earth below him was fresh and fair,
With the sun's long fingers everywhere.

The cat-bird perched where a great leaf hung,
And the great leaf tilted, and flickered, and swung.

The cat-bird sang with a piercing glee
Up in the sun-specked catalpa-tree.

He sang so loud and he sang so long
That his ears were drowned in his own sweet song.

But the little peering leaves of grass
Shook and sundered to let them pass,

To let them pass, the men who heard
Nothing the grass said, nothing the bird.

Each man was still as a shining stone,
Each man's head was a buzzing bone

Wherein two words screeched in and out
Like a grinding saw with its turn about:

"Evelyn Ray," each stone man said,
And the words cut back and forth through his head,
And each of them wondered if he were dead.

The cat-bird sang with his head cocked up
Gazing into the sky's blue cup.

The grasses waved back into place,
The sun's long fingers stroked each face,

Each grim, cold face that saw no sun.
And the feet led the faces on and on.

They stopped beside the catalpa-tree,
Said one stone face to the other: "See!"

The other face had nothing to say,
Its lips were frozen on "Evelyn Ray."

They laid their hats in the tall green grass
Where the crickets and grasshoppers pass and pass.

They hung their coats in the crotch of a pine
And paced five feet in an even line.

They measured five paces either way,
And the saws in their heads screeched "Evelyn Ray."

The cat-bird sang so loud and clear
He heard nothing at all, there was nothing to hear.

Even the swish of long legs pushing
Through grass had ceased, there was only the hushing

Of a windless wind in the daisy tops,
And the jar stalks make when a grasshopper hops.

Every now and then a bee boomed over
The black-eyed Susans in search of clover,

And crickets shrilled as crickets do:
One—two. One—two.

The cat-bird sang with his head in the air,
And the sun's bright fingers poked here and there,

Past leaf, and branch, and needle, and cone.
But the stone men stood like men of stone.

Each man lifted a dull stone hand
And his fingers felt like weaving sand,

And his feet seemed standing on a ball
Which tossed and turned in a waterfall.

Each man heard a shot somewhere
Dropping out of the distant air.

But the screaming saws no longer said
"Evelyn Ray," for the men were dead.
. . . . . .

I often think of Evelyn Ray.
What did she do, what did she say?
Did she ever chance to pass that way?

I remember it as a lovely spot
Where a cat-bird sang. When he heard the shot,
Did he fly away? I have quite forgot.

When I went there last, he was singing again
Through a little fleeting, misty rain,
And pine-cones lay where they had lain.

This is the tale as I heard it when
I was young from a man who was threescore and ten.
A lady of clay and two stone men.

A pretty problem is here, no doubt,
If you have a fancy to work it out:
What happens to stone when clay is about?

Muse upon it as long as you will,
I think myself it will baffle your skill,
And your answer will be what mine is—nil.

But every sunny Summer's day
I am teased with the thought of Evelyn Ray,
Poor little image of painted clay.
And Heigh-o! I say.
What if there be a judgment-day?

What if all religions be true,
And Gabriel's trumpet blow for you
And blow for them—what will you do?

Evelyn Ray, will you rise alone?
Or will your lovers of dull gray stone
Pace beside you through the wan

Twilight of that bitter day
To be judged as stone and judged as clay,
And no one to say the judgment nay?

Better be nothing, Evelyn Ray,
A handful of buttercups that sway
In the wind for a children's holiday.

For earth to earth is the best we know,
Where the good blind worms push to and fro
Turning us into the seeds which grow,

And lovers and ladies are dead indeed,
Lost in the sap of a flower seed.
Is this, think you, a sorry creed?

Well, be it so, for the world is wide
And opinions jostle on every side.
What has always been hidden will always hide.

And every year when the fields are high
With oat grass, and red top, and timothy,
I know that a creed is the shell of a lie.

Peace be with you, Evelyn Ray,
And to your lovers, if so it may,
For earth made stone and earth made clay.

THE TAXI

When I go away from you
The world beats dead
Like a slackened drum.
I call out for you against the jutted stars
And shout into the ridges of the wind.
Streets coming fast,
One after the other,
Wedge you away from me,

And the lamps of the city prick my eyes
So that I can no longer see your face.
Why should I leave you,
To wound myself upon the sharp edges of the night?

IN EXCELSIS

You—you
Your shadow is sunlight on a plate of silver;
Your footsteps, the seeding-place of lilies;
Your hands moving, a chime of bells across a windless air.

The movement of your hands is the long, golden running of
light from a rising sun;
It is the hopping of birds upon a garden-path.

As the perfume of jonquils, you come forth in the morning.
Young horses are not more sudden than your thought,
Your words are bees about a pear-tree,
Your fancies are the gold-and-black striped wasps buzzing
among red apples.
I drink your lips,
I eat the whiteness of your hands and feet.
My mouth is open,
As a new jar I am empty and open.
Like white water are you who fill the cup of my mouth,
Like a brook of water thronged with lilies.

You are frozen as the clouds,
You are far and sweet as the high clouds.
I dare reach to you,
I dare touch the rim of your brightness.
I leap beyond the winds,
I cry and shout,
For my throat is keen as a sword
Sharpened on a hone of ivory.
My throat sings the joy of my eyes,
The rushing gladness of my love.

How has the rainbow fallen upon my heart?
How have I snared the seas to lie in my fingers
And caught the sky to be a cover for my head?

How have you come to dwell with me,
Compassing me with the four circles of your mystic lightness,
So that I say "Glory! Glory!" and bow before you
As to a shrine?

Do I tease myself that morning is morning and a day after?
Do I think the air a condescension,
The earth a politeness,
Heaven a boon deserving thanks?
So you—air—earth—heaven—
I do not thank you,
I take you,
I live.
And those things which I say in consequence
Are rubies mortised in a gate of stone.

MEETING-HOUSE HILL

I must be mad, or very tired,
When the curve of a blue bay beyond a railroad track
Is shrill and sweet to me like the sudden springing of a tune,
And the sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
Clear, reticent, superbly final,
With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
It dominates the weak trees,
And the shot of its spire
Is cool and candid,
Rising into an unresisting sky.

Strange meeting-house
Pausing a moment upon a squalid hill-top.
I watch the spire sweeping the sky,
I am dizzy with the movement of the sky;
I might be watching a mast
With its royals set full
Straining before a two-reef breeze.
I might be sighting a tea-clipper,
Tacking into the blue bay,

Just back from Canton
With her hold full of green and blue porcelain
And a Chinese coolie leaning over the rail
Gazing at the white spire
With dull, sea-spent eyes.

LILACS

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Color of lilac,
Your great puffs of flowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.
Among your heart-shaped leaves
Orange orioles hop like music-box birds and sing
Their little weak soft songs;
In the crooks of your branches
The bright eyes of song sparrows sitting on spotted eggs
Peer restlessly through the light and shadow
Of all Springs.
Lilacs in dooryards
Holding quiet conversations with an early moon;
Lilacs watching a deserted house
Settling sideways into the grass of an old road;
Lilacs, wind-beaten, staggering under a lopsided shock of bloom
Above a cellar dug into a hill.
You are everywhere.
You were everywhere.
You tapped the window when the preacher preached his sermon,
And ran along the road beside the boy going to school.
You stood by pasture-bars to give the cows good milking,
You persuaded the housewife that her dish-pan was of silver
And her husband an image of pure gold.
You flaunted the fragrance of your blossoms
Through the wide doors of Custom Houses—
You, and sandalwood, and tea,
Charging the noses of quill-driving clerks
When a ship was in from China.

You called to them: "Goose-quill men, goose-quill men,
May is a month for flitting,"
Until they writhed on their high stools
And wrote poetry on their letter-sheets behind the propped-up ledgers.
Paradoxical New England clerks,
Writing inventories in ledgers, reading the "Song of Solomon" at night,
So many verses before bedtime,
Because it was the Bible.
The dead fed you
Amid the slant stones of graveyards.
Pale ghosts who planted you
Came in the night time
And let their thin hair blow through your clustered stems.
You are of the green sea,
And of the stone hills which reach a long distance.
You are of elm-shaded streets with little shops where they sell kites and marbles,
You are of great parks where every one walks and nobody is at home.
You cover the blind sides of greenhouses
And lean over the top to say a hurry-word through the glass
To your friends, the grapes, inside.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Color of lilac,
You have forgotten your Eastern origin,
The veiled women with eyes like panthers,
The swollen, aggressive turbans of jeweled Pashas.
Now you are a very decent flower,
A reticent flower,
A curiously clear-cut, candid flower,
Standing beside clean doorways,
Friendly to a house-cat and a pair of spectacles,
Making poetry out of a bit of moonlight
And a hundred or two sharp blossoms.

Maine knows you,
Has for years and years;
New Hampshire knows you,
And Massachusetts
And Vermont.
Cape Cod starts you along the beaches to Rhode Island;
Connecticut takes you from a river to the sea.
You are brighter than apples,
Sweeter than tulips,
You are the great flood of our souls
Bursting above the leaf-shapes of our hearts,
You are the smell of all Summers,
The love of wives and children,
The recollection of the gardens of little children,
You are State Houses and Charters
And the familiar treading of the foot to and fro on a road it knows.
May is lilac here in New England,
May is a thrush singing "Sun up!" on a tip-top ash-tree,
May is white clouds behind pine-trees
Puffed out and marching upon a blue sky.
May is a green as no other,
May is much sun through small leaves,
May is soft earth,
And apple-blossoms,
And windows open to a South wind.
May is a full light wind of lilac
From Canada to Narragansett Bay.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Color of lilac,
Heart-leaves of lilac all over New England,
Roots of lilac under all the soil of New England,
Lilac in me because I am New England,
Because my roots are in it,
Because my leaves are of it,
Because my flowers are for it,

Because it is my country
And I speak to it of itself
And sing of it with my own voice
Since certainly it is mine.

RIDGELY TORRENCE

(Frederic) Ridgely Torrence was born at Xenia, Ohio, November 27, 1875, and was educated at Miami and Princeton University. For several years he was librarian of the Astor Library in New York City (1897-1901), later assuming an editorial position on the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*. At present he is the poetry editor of *The New Republic*.

His first volume, *The House of a Hundred Lights* (1900), bears the grave subtitle "A Psalm of Experience after Reading a Couplet of Bidpai" and is a half-whimsical, half-searching hodge-podge of philosophy, love lyrics, artlessness and impudence. The influence of Omar Khayyám and Richard Hovey is apparent but not too dominant; Torrence saves himself on the very verge of sentimentality and rhetoric by a chuckle, an adroit right-about-face.

It was not until a quarter of a century later that Torrence published his second volume of verse. In the meantime, poems of his had attracted immediate attention upon their appearance in magazines and a few of his lyrics had been quoted so often that they were familiar to those who had never heard of Torrence's other work. Torrence had remained in the peculiar position of one whose best verse was not only unprocurable, but unprinted. *Hesperides* (1925) remedied this strange circumstance. Like his first volume, this is not a large book—Torrence is not a voluminous writer—but these one hundred pages contain definite and distinguished poetry. In *Hesperides* one finds the magnificent "Eye-Witness," a most original treatment of the theme of Christ's second coming, the purely lyrical "The Singers in a Cloud" and that brief epic, "The Bird and the Tree" which is as famous as it is stirring.

Between Torrence's earliest and most recent volume, three of his plays were published: *El Dorado* (1903), *Abelard and Héloise* (1907), and *Granny Maumee, The Rider of Dreams, Simon the Cyrenian* (1917). The last group, being three plays for a Negro theater, contains the best of Torrence's dramatic writing. He has caught here, particularly in *Granny Maumee* and *The Rider of Dreams*, something of that high color which the Negro himself is only beginning to reflect.

THE BIRD AND THE TREE[1]

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong tonight.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long tonight.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door tonight.
What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score tonight.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
An' that's the reason why tonight
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door—
You're out to die tonight.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face;
That's the way you'll know them there—
A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant—
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

[1] Compare the poem on the same subject on page 144.

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go—
For you it may be better so—
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

THE SON

(*Southern Ohio Market Town*)

I heard an old farm-wife,
Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
We're just us two now.

"Twelve bushels at sixty cents,
It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
But the harvest early."

ROBERT FROST

Although known as the chief interpreter of New England, Robert (Lee) Frost was born in San Francisco, California, March 26, 1875. His father, born in New Hampshire, taught school, edited a paper, entered politics, and moved to San Francisco where his "copperhead" sympathy with the South led him to christen his son Robert Lee. Frost's mother, after the death of her husband, supported herself and her children by teaching school; bringing the family back East to the towns and hills where, for eight generations, his forefathers had lived and where,

much later, Frost was to uphold the tradition by lecturing, accepting an "idle professorship" ("being a sort of poetic radiator") at Amherst, and buying farms in Vermont. After graduating from the high school at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1892, Frost entered Dartmouth College, where he remained only a few months. The routine of study was too much for him and, wishing to keep his mind free for creative work, he decided to earn his living and became a bobbin-boy in one of the mills at Lawrence. He had already begun to write poetry; a few of his verses had appeared in *The Independent*. But the strange, soil-flavored quality which even then distinguished his lines was not relished by the editors, and the very magazines to which he sent poems that today are famous rejected his verse with unanimity. For twenty years Frost continued to write his highly characteristic work in spite of the discouraging apathy, and for twenty years the poet remained unknown.

In 1897, two years after his marriage, Frost moved his family to Cambridge, Massachusetts, entering Harvard in a final determination to achieve culture. This time he followed the curriculum for two years, but at the end of that dry period he stopped trying to learn and started to teach. (Curiously enough, though Frost made light of and even ridiculed his scholarship, his marks in Greek and the classical studies were always exceptionally high.) For three years he taught school, made shoes, edited a weekly paper, and in 1900 became a farmer at Derry, New Hampshire. During the next eleven years Frost labored to wrest a living from stubborn hills with scant success. Loneliness claimed him for its own; the rocks refused to give him a living; the literary world continued to remain oblivious of his existence. Frost sought a change of environment and, after a few years' teaching at Derry and Plymouth, New Hampshire, sold his farm and, with his wife and four children, sailed for England in September, 1912.

For the first time in his life, Frost moved in a literary world. Groups merged, dissolved and separated over night; controversy and creation were in the air. A friendship was established with the poets Abercrombie, Brooke and Gibson; a close intimacy with Edward Thomas. Here Frost wrote most of his longer narratives, took his lyrics to a publisher with few hopes, went back to the suburban town of Beaconsfield and turned to other matters. A few months later *A Boy's Will* (1913) was published and Frost was recognized at once as one of the authentic voices of modern poetry.

A Boy's Will is seemingly subjective; in spite of certain reminiscences of Browning it is no set of derivations. In *A Boy's Will* Frost is not yet completely in possession of his own idiom; but

the *timbre* is recognizably his. No one but Frost could have written "Reluctance" or "The Tuft of Flowers." Wholly lyrical, this volume, lacking the concentrated emotion of his subsequent works, is a significant introduction to the following book, which became an international classic. Early in 1914, Frost leased a small place in Gloucestershire; in the spring of the same year, *North of Boston* (1914), one of the most intensely American books ever printed, was published in England. (See Preface.) This is, as he has called it, a "book of people." And it is more than that—it is a book of backgrounds as living and dramatic as the people they overshadow. Frost vivifies a stone wall, an empty cottage, a grindstone, a mountain, a forgotten wood-pile left

> To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
> With the slow, smokeless burning of decay.

North of Boston, like its successor, contains much of the finest poetry of our time. Rich in its actualities, richer in its spiritual values, every line moves with the double force of observation and implication. The very first poem in the book illustrates this power of character and symbolism. Although Frost is not arguing for anything in particular, one senses here something more than the enemies of walls. In "Mending Wall," we see two elemental and opposed forces. "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," insists the seeker after causes; "Good fences make good neighbors," doggedly replies the literal-minded lover of tradition. Here, beneath the whimsical turns and pungency of expression, we have the essence of nationalism versus the internationalist: the struggle, though the poet would be the last to prod the point, between blind responsibility and questioning iconoclasm.

So with all of Frost's characters. Like the worn-out incompetent in "The Death of the Hired Man" (one of the finest *genre* pictures of our time), or the autobiographical country boy "climbing black branches up a snow white trunk toward heaven" in "Birches," or the positive, tight-lipped old lady in "The Black Cottage," his people are always amplified through the poet's circumlocutory but precise psychology. They remain close to their soil. Frost's monologs and dramatic idyls, written in a conversational blank verse, establish the connection between the vernacular and the language of literature; they remain rooted in realism. But Frost is never a photographic realist. "There are," he once said, "two types of realist—the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one; and the one who is satisfied with the potato brushed clean. I'm inclined to be the second kind. . . . To me, the thing that art does for life is to clean it, to strip it to form."

In March, 1915, Frost came back to America—to a hill outside of Franconia, New Hampshire. *North of Boston* had been reprinted in the United States and its author, who had left the country an unknown writer, returned to find himself famous. *Mountain Interval,* containing some of Frost's most characteristic poems ("Birches," and "An Old Man's Winter Night" are typical), appeared in 1916. The idiom is the same as in the earlier volumes, but the notes are more varied, the lyrics intensified, the assurance is stronger.

The subtle variations of the tones of speech find their sympathetic reporter here; the lines disclose delicate shades of emphasis in the way they present an entire scene by giving only a significant detail. Altogether natural, yet fanciful no less than realistic, this poetry escapes labels, "but," Frost once said, with a suspicion of a twinkle, "if I must be classified as a poet, I might be called a Synecdochist; for I prefer the synecdoche in poetry—that figure of speech in which we use a part for the whole."

New Hampshire (1923), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the best volume of poetry published in 1923, synthesizes Frost's qualities: it combines the stark unity of *North of Boston* and the diffused geniality of *Mountain Interval.* If one thing predominates, it is a feeling of quiet classicism; the poet has lowered his voice but not the strength of his convictions. To say, as was said, that Frost gives us a poetry "without the delight of the senses, without the glow of warm feeling" is—particularly when faced with *New Hampshire*—to utter an absurdity. Frost, in spite of a superficial underemphasis, does not hesitate to declare his close affection. Such poems as "Two Look at Two," with its tremendous wave of love, "To Earthward," with its unreserved intensity, even the brilliantly condensed "Fire and Ice," with its candidly registered passion—all these brim with a physical radiance, with the very delight and pain of the senses. Nor is the fanciful by-play, the sly banter so characteristic of this poet, absent from the volume. Who but Frost could put so whimsical an accent in the farewell to an orchard entitled "Good-by and Keep Cold"; who but he could summon, with so few strokes, the frightened colt "with one forefoot on the wall, the other curled at his breast" in "The Runaway." The very scheme of *New Hampshire* is an extended whimsicality: he offers the contents of the volume as a series of explanatory notes (and grace notes) to the title poem, which is supposed to be the book's *raison d'être.* The long poems (the "notes") rank with the narrative monologs in *North of Boston;* the "grace notes" contain not merely Frost's finest lines but some of the most haunting lyrics ever written by

an American. Such a poem as "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" once in the mind of a reader will never leave it. Had Frost written nothing but these thirty "grace notes" his place in poetry would be assured. A revised *Selected Poems* (1928) and a rearranged *Collected Poems* (1930) confirmed the conclusions; the unpretentious bucolics had become contemporary classics.

It has been said that Frost's work suffers from an exclusiveness, and even his most ardent admirers would be willing to admit that his is not an indiscriminately inclusive passion like Whitman's. But Frost loves what he loves with a fierce attachment, a tenderness fixed beyond a more easily transferred regard. His devotion to the intimacies of earth is, even more than Wordsworth's, rich, almost inordinate in its fidelity; what his emotion (or his poetry) may lack in windy range, is trebly compensated for by its untroubled depths.

This is more true than ever of *West-Running Brook* (1928) which was hailed with loud—and misleading—enthusiasm. No contemporary poet received more praise than Frost, and none was more praised for the wrong attributes. As late as 1928, most of the critics were surprised that the writer identified with the long monologues in *North of Boston* should turn to lyrics, forgetting that Frost's first volume (written in the 1890's and published twenty years later) was wholly and insistently lyrical. One reviewer, echoing the false platitude concerning New England bleakness, applauded Frost's almost colorless reticence, his "preference for black and white." Another made the discovery that "where he was formerly content to limn a landscape . . . here the emphasis is primarily the poet's emotion." A more understanding consideration of Frost's poetry would have instructed the critics. They would have seen that no volumes have ever been less black and white, no poetry so delicately shaded. The so-called inhibitions disappear upon rereading. Frost's poems are only superficially reticent; actually they are profound and personal revelations. Frost has never been "content to limn a landscape." He cannot suggest a character or a countryside without informing the subject with his own philosophy, a philosophy whose bantering accents cannot hide a moral earnestness. Beyond the fact ("the dearest dream that labor knows"), beyond the tone of voice, which is—at least technically—the poet's first concern, there is that ardent and unifying emotion which is Frost's peculiar quality and his essential spirit. Nothing could prove it more fully than the title-poem with its seemingly casual but actually cosmic philosophy.

West-Running Brook is a reflection and restatement of all that has gone before. The autobiographical references are a little more outspoken; Amy Lowell's assertion that "there is no poem which

has San Francisco as a background nor which seems to owe its inception to the author's early life" is answered again and again by poems which are packed with the poet's youth. Thus a student will learn that the presumably "late" poem entitled "On Going Unnoticed" was written as early as 1901; the poem "Bereft" was conceived about 1893; and "Once by the Pacific" is half-humorously dated "as of about 1880"—at which time the poet was exactly six years old.

In the new volume, Frost maintains his rôle of half-earnest synecdochist. Here, again, offering the part for the whole, he reestablishes the force of suggestion and reaffirms his conviction: "All that an artist needs is samples." Parsimony is achieved in every one of the new poems. It sharpens the ruminating accents of "Tree at My Window," fastens the epigrammatic irony of "The Peaceful Shepherd," quickens the somber power of "Bereft" and "Once by the Pacific," points the teasing play of "The Bear." It is, parenthetically, interesting to observe how Frost's poetry answers the charge that he is unremittingly grave; poems as late as "The Egg and the Machine" and as early as "Brown's Descent" have not only that talk-flavored tone which he cherishes but a humor pungent and broad. The ripe repose, the banked passions, the nicely blended tenderness and humor are everywhere. Here neighborliness is universalized and localism is a province of humanity. But beneath all is the individual to whom, as G. R. Elliott points out, the "eternal mystery" is "eternal appetite under eternal control."

Growth? Change? A new note? The answers may be found in two lines of one of Frost's first poems, a premonitory couplet written before 1900:

> They would not find me changed from him they knew,
> Only more sure of all I thought was true.

No reviewer has written, no critic will write, a better summary.

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the leveled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

RELUCTANCE

Out through the fields and the woods
  And over the walls I have wended;
I have climbed the hills of view
  And looked at the world, and descended;
I have come by the highway home,
  And lo, it is ended.

The leaves are all dead on the ground,
  Save those that the oak is keeping
To ravel them one by one
  And let them go scraping and creeping
Out over the crusted snow,
  When others are sleeping.

And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,
  No longer blown hither and thither;
The last lone aster is gone;
  The flowers of the witch-hazel wither;
The heart is still aching to seek,
  But the feet question "Whither?"

Ah, when to the heart of man
  Was it ever less than a treason
To go with the drift of things
  To yield with a grace to reason,
And bow and accept the end
  Of a love or a season?

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper bowlders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the bowlders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down!" I could say "elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness, as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

THE COW IN APPLE-TIME

Something inspires the only cow of late
To make no more of a wall than an open gate,
And think no more of wall-builders than fools.
Her face is flecked with pomace and she drools
A cider sirup. Having tasted fruit,
She scorns a pasture withering to the root.
She runs from tree to tree where lie and sweeten
The windfalls spiked with stubble and worm-eaten.
She leaves them bitten when she has to fly.
She bellows on a knoll against the sky.
Her udder shrivels and the milk goes dry.

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbor him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Some one else can.' 'Then some one else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's some one at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—
You needn't smile—I didn't recognize him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels,
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathize. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin

Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to some one in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us, you think,
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt today.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As any one. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt any one."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.

He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there tonight.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

AFTER APPLE-PICKING

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.

But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem-end and blossom-end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him—at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him

In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off; and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what;
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man—one man—can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair

Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

BROWN'S DESCENT

OR, THE WILLY-NILLY SLIDE

Brown lived at such a lofty farm
  That every one for miles could see
His lantern when he did his chores
  In winter after half-past three.

And many must have seen him make
  His wild descent from there one night,
'Cross lots, 'cross walls, 'cross everything,
  Describing rings of lantern light.

Between the house and barn the gale
  Got him by something he had on
And blew him out on the icy crust
  That cased the world, and he was gone!

Walls were all buried, trees were few:
  He saw no stay unless he stove
A hole in somewhere with his heel.
  But though repeatedly he strove

And stamped and said things to himself,
  And sometimes something seemed to yield,
He gained no foothold, but pursued
  His journey down from field to field.

Sometimes he came with arms outspread
  Like wings revolving in the scene
Upon his longer axis, and
  With no small dignity of mien.

Faster or slower as he chanced,
  Sitting or standing as he chose,
According as he feared to risk
  His neck, or thought to spare his clothes,

He never let the lantern drop.
  And some exclaimed who saw afar
The figure he described with it,
  "I wonder what those signals are

"Brown makes at such an hour of night!
He's celebrating something strange.
I wonder if he's sold his farm,
Or been made Master of the Grange."

He reeled, he lurched, he bobbed, he checked;
He fell and made the lantern rattle
(But saved the light from going out).
So half-way down he fought the battle

Incredulous of his own bad luck.
And then becoming reconciled
To everything, he gave it up
And came down like a coasting child.

"Well—I—be—" that was all he said,
As standing in the river road,
He looked back up the slippery slope
(Two miles it was) to his abode.

Sometimes as an authority
On motor-cars, I'm asked if I
Should say our stock was petered out,
And this is my sincere reply:

Yankees are what they always were.
Don't think Brown ever gave up hope
Of getting home again because
He couldn't climb that slippery slope;

Or even thought of standing there
Until the January thaw
Should take the polish off the crust.
He bowed with grace to natural law,

And then went round it on his feet,
After the manner of our stock;
Not much concerned for those to whom,
At that particular time o'clock,

It must have looked as if the course
He steered was really straight away
From that which he was headed for—
Not much concerned for them, I say,

But now he snapped his eyes three times;
Then shook his lantern, saying, "Ile's
'Bout out!" and took the long way home
By road, a matter of several miles.

THE RUNAWAY

Once when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say, "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted to us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled,
And we saw him, or thought we saw him, dim and gray,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, 'Sakes,
It's only weather.' He'd think she didn't know!
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

TO EARTHWARD

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of—was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Down hill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain
And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

FIRE AND ICE

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.

But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

TWO LOOK AT TWO

Love and forgetting might have carried them
A little further up the mountain side
With night so near, but not much further up.
They must have halted soon in any case
With thoughts of the path back, how rough it was
With rock and washout, and unsafe in darkness;
When they were halted by a tumbled wall
With barbed-wire binding. They stood facing this,
Spending what onward impulse they still had
In one last look the way they must not go,
On up the failing path, where, if a stone
Or earthslide moved at night, it moved itself;
No footstep moved it. "This is all," they sighed,
"Good-night to woods." But not so; there was more.
A doe from round a spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall, as near the wall as they.
She saw them in their field, they her in hers.
The difficulty of seeing what stood still,
Like some up-ended bowlder split in two,
Was in her clouded eyes: they saw no fear there.
She seemed to think that two thus they were safe.
Then, as if they were something that, though strange,
She could not trouble her mind with too long,
She sighed and passed unscared along the wall.
"*This*, then, is all. What more is there to ask?"
But no, not yet. A snort to bid them wait.
A buck from round the spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall as near the wall as they.
This was an antlered buck of lusty nostril.
Not the same doe come back into her place.
He viewed them quizzically with jerks of head,
As if to ask, "Why don't you make some motion?

Or give some sign of life? Because you can't.
I doubt if you're as living as you look."
Thus till he had them almost feeling dared
To stretch a proffering hand—and a spell-breaking.
Then he too passed unscared along the wall.
Two had seen two, whichever side you spoke from.
"This *must* be all." It was all. Still they stood,
A great wave from it going over them,
As if the earth in one unlooked-for favor
Had made them certain earth returned their love.

A SKY PAIR

CANIS MAJOR

The Great Overdog,
That heavenly beast
With a star in one eye,
Gives a leap in the East.

He dances upright
All the way to the West,
And never once drops
On his forefeet to rest.

I'm a poor Underdog;
But tonight I will bark,
With the Great Overdog
That romps through the dark.

THE PEACEFUL SHEPHERD

If heaven were to do again,
And on the pasture bars
I leaned to line the figures in
Between the dotted stars,

I should be tempted to forget,
I think, the Crown of Rule,
The Scales of Trade, the Cross of Faith,
As hardly worth renewal.

For these have governed in our lives,
And see how men have warred!
The Cross, the Crown, the Scales, may all
As well have been the Sword.

BEREFT

Where had I heard this wind before
Change like this to a deeper roar?
What would it take my standing there for,
Holding open a restive door,
Looking down hill to a frothy shore?
Summer was past and day was past.
Somber clouds on the West were massed.
Out in the porch's sagging floor
Leaves got up in a coil and hissed,
Blindly struck at my knee and missed.
Something sinister in the tone
Told me my secret must be known:
Word I was in the house alone
Somehow must have gotten abroad;
Word I was in my life alone;
Word I had no one left but God.

TREE AT MY WINDOW

Tree at my window, window tree,
My sash is lowered when night comes on;
But let there never be curtain drawn
Between you and me.

Vague dream-head lifted out of the ground,
And thing next most diffuse to cloud,
Not all your light tongues talking aloud
Could be profound.

But tree, I have seen you taken and tossed,
And if you have seen me when I slept,
You have seen me when I was taken and swept
And all but lost.

That day she put our heads together,
Fate had her imagination about her,
Your head so much concerned with outer,
Mine with inner, weather.

WEST-RUNNING BROOK

"Fred, where is north?"
"North? North is there, my love.
The brook runs west."
"West-running Brook then call it."
(West-running Brook men call it to this day.)
"What does it think it's doing running west
When all the other country brooks flow east
To reach the ocean? It must be the brook
Can trust itself to go by contraries
The way I can with you—and you with me—
Because we're—we're—I don't know what we are.
What are we?"
"Young or new?"
"We must be something.
We've said we two. Let's change that to we three.
As you and I are married to each other,
We'll both be married to the brook. We'll build
Our bridge across it, and the bridge shall be
Our arm thrown over it asleep beside it.
Look, look, it's waving to us with a wave
To let us know it hears me."
"Why, my dear,
That wave's been standing off this jut of shore—"
(The black stream, catching on a sunken rock,
Flung backward on itself in one white wave,
And the white water rode the black forever,
Not gaining but not losing, like a bird
White feathers from the struggle of whose breast
Flecked the dark stream and flecked the darker pool
Below the point, and were at last driven wrinkled
In a white scarf against the far shore alders.)
"That wave's been standing off this jut of shore
Ever since rivers, I was going to say,
Were made in heaven. It wasn't waved to us."

"It wasn't, yet it was. If not to you
It was to me—in an annunciation."

"Oh, if you take it off to lady-land,
As 'twere the country of the Amazons
We men must see you to the confines of
And leave you there, ourselves forbid to enter,—
It is your brook! I have no more to say."

"Yes, you have, too. Go on. You thought of something."

"Speaking of contraries, see how the brook
In that white wave runs counter to itself.
It is from that in water we were from
Long, long before we were from any creature.
Here we, in our impatience of the steps,
Get back to the beginning of beginnings,
The stream of everything that runs away.
Some say existence like a Pirouot
And Pirouette, forever in one place,
Stands still and dances, but it runs away,
It seriously, sadly, runs away
To fill the abyss' void with emptiness.
It flows beside us in this water brook,
But it flows over us. It flows between us
To separate us for a panic moment.
It flows between us, over us, and *with* us.
And it is time, strength, tone, light, life and love
And even substance lapsing unsubstantial;
The universal cataract of death
That spends to nothingness—and unresisted,
Save by some strange resistance in itself,
Not just a swerving, but a throwing back,
As if regret were in it and were sacred.
It has this throwing backward on itself
So that the fall of most of it is always
Raising a little, sending up a little.
Our life runs down in sending up the clock.
The brook runs down in sending up our life.
The sun runs down in sending up the brook.
And there is something sending up the sun.

It is this backward motion toward the source,
Against the stream, that most we see ourselves in,
The tribute of the current to the source.
It is from this in nature we are from.
It is most us."
"Today will be the day
You said so."
"No, today will be the day
You said the brook was called West-running Brook."

"Today will be the day of what we both said."

ONCE BY THE PACIFIC

The shattered water made a misty din,
Great waves looked over others coming in,
And thought of doing something to the shore
That water never did to land before.
The clouds were low and hairy in the skies
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.
You could not tell, and yet it looked as if
The sand was lucky in being backed by cliff,
The cliff in being backed by continent.
It looked as if a night of dark intent
Was coming, and not only a night, an age.
Some one had better be prepared for rage.
There would be more than ocean water broken
Before God's last *Put out the light* was spoken.

THE BEAR

The bear puts both arms around the tree above her
And draws it down as if it were a lover
And its choke-cherries lips to kiss good-by,
Then lets it snap back upright in the sky.
Her next step rocks a bowlder on the wall
(She's making her cross-country in the fall.)
Her great weight creaks the barbed-wire in its staples
As she flings over and off down through the maples,
Leaving on one wire tooth a lock of hair.
Such is the uncaged progress of the bear.

The world has room to make a bear feel free;
The universe seems cramped to you and me.
Man acts more like a poor bear in a cage
That all day fights a nervous inward rage,
His mood rejecting all his mind suggests.
He paces back and forth and never rests
The toe-nail click and shuffle of his feet,
The telescope at one end of his beat,
And at the other end the microscope,
Two instruments of nearly equal hope,
And in conjunction giving quite a spread.
Or if he rests from scientific tread,
'Tis only to sit back and sway his head
Through ninety odd degrees of arc, it seems,
Between two metaphysical extremes.
He sits back on his fundamental butt
With lifted snout and eyes (if any) shut,
(He almost looks religious but he's not),
And back and forth he sways from cheek to cheek,
At one extreme agreeing with one Greek,
At the other agreeing with another Greek
Which may be thought, but only so to speak.
A baggy figure, equally pathetic
When sedentary and when peripatetic.

SAND DUNES

Sea waves are green and wet,
But up from where they die
Rise others vaster yet,
And those are brown and dry.

They are the sea made land
To come at the fisher town,
And bury in solid sand
The men she could not drown.

She may know cove and cape,
But she does not know mankind
If by any change of shape
She hopes to cut off mind.

Men left her a ship to sink;
They can leave her a hut as well,
And be but more free to think
For the one more cast-off shell.

THE LOVELY SHALL BE CHOOSERS

The Voice said, "Hurl her down!"

The Voices, "How far down?"

"Seven levels of the world."

"How much time have we?"

"Take twenty years.
She would refuse love safe with wealth and honor.
The Lovely shall be choosers, shall they?
Then let them choose!"

"Then we shall let her choose?"

"Yes, let her choose.
Take up the task beyond her choosing."

Invisible hands crowded on her shoulder
In readiness to weigh upon her.
But she stood straight still,
In broad round ear-rings, gold and jet with pearls,
And broad round suchlike brooch,
Her cheeks high colored,
Proud and the pride of friends.

The Voice asked, "You can let her choose?"

"Yes, we can let her and still triumph."

"Do it by joys. And leave her always blameless.
Be her first joy her wedding,
That though a wedding,
Is yet—well, something *they* know, he and she.
And after that her next joy
That though she grieves, her grief is secret:

Those friends know nothing of her grief to make it shameful.
Her third joy that though now they cannot help but know,
They move in pleasure too far off
To think much or much care.
Give her a child at either knee for fourth joy
To tell once and once only, for them never to forget,
How once she walked in brightness,
And make them see in the winter firelight.
But give her friends, for then she dares not tell
For their foregone incredulousness.
And be her next joy this:
Her never having deigned to tell them.
Make her among the humblest even
Seem to them less than they are.
Hopeless of being known for what she has been,
Failing of being loved for what she is,
Give her the comfort for her sixth of knowing
She fails from strangeness to a way of life
She came to from too high too late to learn.
Then send some *one* with eye to see
And wonder at her where she is
And words to wonder in her hearing how she came there,
But without time to stay and hear her story.
Be her last joy her heart's going out to this one
So that she almost speaks.

You know them—seven in all."

"Trust us," the Voices said.

THE EGG AND THE MACHINE

He gave the solid rail a hateful kick.
From far away there came an answering tick;
And then another tick. He knew the code:
His hate had roused an engine up the road.
He wished when he had had the track alone
He had attacked it with a club or stone
And bent some rail wide open like a switch
So as to wreck the engine in the ditch.
Too late, though, now to throw it down the bank;
Its click was rising to a nearer clank.

Here it came breasting like a horse in skirts.
(He stood well back for fear of scalding squirts.)
Then for a moment there was only size,
Confusion, and a roar that drowned the cries
He raised against the gods in the machine.
Then once again the sand-bank lay serene.
The traveler's eye picked up a turtle trail,
Between the dotted feet a streak of tail,
And followed it to where he made out vague,
But certain signs of buried turtle egg;
And probing with one finger not too rough,
He found suspicious sand, and sure enough
The pocket of a little turtle mine.
If there was one egg in it, there were nine,
Torpedo-like, with shell of gritty leather
All packed in sand to wait the trump together.
"You'd better not disturb me any more,"
He told the distance. "I am armed for war.
The next machine that has the power to pass
Will get this plasm in its goggle glass."

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

William Ellery Leonard was born at Plainfield, New Jersey, January 25, 1876. He received his A.M. at Harvard in 1899 and completed his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Bonn. After traveling for several years throughout Europe, he became a teacher and has been professor of English in the University of Wisconsin since 1906.

The Vaunt of Man (1912) is a characteristic volume. Traditional in form and material, it is anything but conservative in spirit. Leonard's fervor speaks in the simplest of his quatrains and the strictest of his sonnets. This protesting passion is given an even wider sweep in *The Lynching Bee and Other Poems* (1920), the title-poem being an indictment in which the poet's outrage is heard with a new ironism.

Tutankhamen and After (1924) is an ambitious attempt to picture the continuity of man's life in three pages, but in spite of a few felicitous lines the title-poem is prosy. The shorter verses are more successful. It was a grave injustice to claim this as Leonard's "most representative volume." That distinction must be claimed by *Two Lives*, which was privately issued in 1923 and publicly offered in 1925. Reminiscent of Richard Dehmel's *Zwei Menschen*, this chain of sonnets compresses an intensity in which the effect of the cumulative drama is far greater than that of any single poem.

The Locomotive God (1927) is a strange document written in autobiographical prose. It is the narrative of a student and poet who ends as a neurotic confined by an unusual phobia within a few blocks' radius of his home. Disproportionate in its concern with trifles, painful as analysis of fevered imagination, the book has a personal interest beyond the case history.

A Son of Earth (1929) is composed of selections from Leonard's previous poetry with the exception of his translations and *Two Lives*. It, too, was arranged autobiographically "with reference to activities, aims, influences, crises." This larger collection suffers the same defects as *Two Lives;* its sincerity is compelling, its candor unreserved, but only a few pages could be offered as examples of poetry *per se*. *A Son of Earth* contains page after page of inversions and pomposities incredibly preserved; one can understand the youth that luxuriated in such *clichés* as "golden fee," "slumbering aeons," "shadowy woodlands," "white nymphs," "brazen trumpets," "immemorial tides," but it is hard to believe in a maturity that proudly reprints them. Rhetoric aside, there is wisdom here and wit, a malicious sparkle in the revised fables grouped under "Aesop and Hyssop."

Besides his original poetry, Leonard has published several

volumes of translations of Beowulf, Empedocles and Lucretius as well as the set of paraphrases of the fables of Aesop.

THE IMAGE OF DELIGHT

O how came I that loved stars, moon, and flame,
And unimaginable wind and sea,
All inner shrines and temples of the free,
Legends and hopes and golden books of fame;
I that upon the mountain carved my name
With cliffs and clouds and eagles over me,
O how came I to stoop to loving thee—
I that had never stooped before to shame?

O 'twas not thee! Too eager of a white
Far beauty and a voice to answer mine,
Myself I built an image of delight,
Which all one purple day I deemed divine—
And when it vanished in the fiery night,
I lost not thee, nor any shape of thine.

TO THE VICTOR

Man's mind is larger than his brow of tears;
This hour is not my all of time; this place
My all of earth; nor this obscene disgrace
My all of life; and thy complacent sneers
Shall not pronounce my doom to my compeers
While the Hereafter lights me in the face,
And from the Past, as from the mountain's base,
Rise, as I rise, the long tumultuous cheers.
And who slays me must overcome a world:
Heroes at arms, and virgins who became
Mothers of children, prophecy and song;
Walls of old cities with their flags unfurled;
Peaks, headlands, ocean and its isles of fame—
And sun and moon and all that made me strong!

Alex Rogers was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1876, and was educated in the public schools of that city. After attempting various occupations, he became a writer of words for popular songs. Many of the "hits" of the Williams and Walker musical comedies were written by him; the name of Bert Williams was synonymous with "The Jonah Man" and "Nobody," which were created for him by Rogers. Two of his most characteristic lyrics appear in *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922), an anthology edited by James Weldon Johnson.

"The Rain Song," to which Will Marion Cook, another gifted Negro, furnished infectious music, was originally a concerted number in one of the Williams and Walker burlesques. It is interesting to compare Rogers' version with the far older "Signs of Rain" by Edward Jenner. It is not only amusing but enlightening from an ethnographic standpoint to see how Rogers has localized many of Jenner's polished lines.

RAIN SONG

Bro. Simmons

"Walk right in, Brudder Wilson—how you feelin' today?"

Bro. Wilson

"Jes' tol'able, Brudder Simmons, but den I ginnerly feels dat way."

Bro. Simmons

"Here's White an' Black an' Brown an' Green; how's all you gent'mens been?"

Bro. White

"My health is good but my bus'ness slack."

Bro. Black

"I'se been suff'rin' lots wid pains in my back."

Bro. Brown

"My ole' ooman's sick, but *I'se* alright—"

Bro. Green

"Yes, I went aftuh Doctuh fuh her 'tuther night—"

Bro. Simmons

"Here's Sandy Turner, as I live!"

Bro. Turner

"Yes, I didn't 'spect to git here—but here I is!"

Bro. Simmons

"Now gent'mens, make you'selves to home,
Dare's nothin' to fear—my ole 'ooman's gone—
My stars, da weather's pow'ful warm—
I wouldn't be s'prised ef we had a storm."

Bro. Brown

"No, Brudder Simmons, we kin safely say
'Tain't gwine to be no storm today,
Kase here am facts dat's mighty plain
An' any time you sees 'em you kin look fuh rain:

"Any time you hears da cheers and tables crack
An' da folks wid rheumatics—dare jints is on da rack—"

All

"Lookout fuh rain, rain, rain."

Bro. Brown and Chorus

"When da ducks quack loud an' da peacocks cry,
An' da far off hills seems to be right nigh,
Prepare fuh rain, rain, rain!

"When da ole cat on da hearth wid her velvet paws
'Gins to wipin' over her whiskered jaws,
Sho' sign o' rain, rain, rain!

"When da frog's done changed his yaller vest,
An' in his brown suit he is dressed,
Mo' rain, an' still mo' rain!

"When you notice da air it stan's stock still,
An' da blackbird's voice it gits so awful shrill,
Dat am da time fuh rain.

"When yo' dog quits bones an' begins to fas',
An' when you see him eatin', he's eatin' grass:
Shoes', trues', cert'nes' sign ob rain!"

Refrain

"No, Brudder Simmons, we kin safely say,
'Tain't gwine tuh be no rain today.
Kase da sut [1] ain't fallin' an' da dogs ain't sleep,
An' you ain't seen no spiders fum dare cobwebs creep;
Last night da sun went bright to bed,
An' da moon ain't nevah once been seen to hang her head;
If youse watched all dis, den you kin safely say,
Dat dar ain't a-gwine to be no rain today.
No rain today!"

CARL SANDBURG

Carl (August) Sandburg was born of Swedish stock at Galesburg, Illinois, January 6, 1878. His schooling was haphazard; at thirteen he went to work on a milk wagon. During the next six years he was, in rapid succession, porter in a barber shop, scene-shifter in a cheap theater, truck-handler in a brickyard, turner apprentice in a pottery, dish-washer in Denver and Omaha hotels, harvest hand in Kansas wheatfields. These tasks equipped him, as no amount of learning could have done, to be the laureate of industrial America. When war with Spain was declared in 1898, Sandburg, avid for fresh adventure, enlisted in Company C, Sixth Illinois Volunteers.

On his return from the campaign in Porto Rico, Sandburg entered Lombard College in Galesburg and, for the first time, began to think in terms of literature. After leaving college, where he had been captain of the basket-ball team as well as editor-in-chief of the college paper, Sandburg did all manner of things to

[1] Sut = soot.

earn a living. He was advertising manager for a department store and worked as district organizer for the Social-Democratic party of Wisconsin. He became a salesman, a pamphleteer, a newspaperman. On the staff of a business magazine, he became a "safety first" expert, his articles on accident-prevention bringing him before manufacturers' conventions.

In 1904 Sandburg published the proverbial "slender sheaf," a tiny pamphlet of twenty-two poems, uneven in quality, but strangely like the work of the mature Sandburg in feeling. What is more, these experiments anticipated the very inflection of the later poems, with their spiritual kinship to Henley and Whitman; several of these early experiments (with the exception of the rhymed verses) might be placed, without seeming incongruous, in the later collections. The idiom of *Smoke and Steel* (1920) is more intensified, but it is the same idiom as that of "Milville" (1903), which begins:

> Down in southern New Jersey they make glass.
> By day and by night, the fires burn on in Milville and bid the sand let in the light.

Meanwhile the newspaperman was struggling to keep the poet alive. Until he was thirty-six years old Sandburg was totally unknown to the literary world. In 1914 a group of his poems appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse;* during the same year one of the group (the now famous "Chicago") was awarded the Levinson prize of two hundred dollars. A little more than a year later his first, full-fledged book was published, and Sandburg "arrived."

Chicago Poems (1916) is full of ferment; it seethes with loose energy. If Frost is an intellectual aristocrat, Sandburg might be termed an emotional democrat. Here is exultation that is also exaltation. Sandburg's speech is simple and powerful; he uses slang as freely (and beautifully) as his predecessors used the now archaic tongue of their times. Never has the American vulgate been used with such artistry and effect. (See Preface.) Immediately cries of protest were heard: Sandburg was coarse and brutal; his work ugly and distorted: his language unrefined, unfit for poetry. His detractors forgot that Sandburg was brutal only to condemn brutality; that beneath his toughness, he was one of the tenderest of living poets; that, when he used colloquialisms and a richly metaphorical slang, he was searching for new poetic values in "limber, lasting, fierce words"—unconsciously answering Whitman who asked, "Do you suppose the liberties and brawn of These States have to do only with delicate lady-words? With gloved gentleman-words?"

Cornhuskers (1918) is another step forward; it is as sweeping as its forerunner and more sensitive. The gain in power and restraint is evident in the very first poem, a wide-swept vision of the prairie. Here is something of the surge of a Norse saga; *Cornhuskers* is keen with a salty vigor, a sympathy for all that is splendid and terrible in Nature. But the raw violence is restrained to the point of a half-withheld mysticism. There are, in this volume, dozens of those delicate perceptions of beauty that must astonish those who think that Sandburg can write only a big-fisted, rough-neck sort of poetry. As Sandburg has sounded some of the most *fortissimo* notes in modern poetry, he has also breathed some of its softest phrases. "Cool Tombs," one of the most poignant lyrics of our times, moves with a low music; "Grass" whispers as quietly as the earlier "Fog" stole in on stealthy, cat feet.

Smoke and Steel (1920) is the synthesis of its predecessors. In this collection, Sandburg has fused mood, accent and image. Whether the poet evokes the spirit of a jazz-band or, having had the radiance (the "flash crimson"), prays to touch life at its other extreme, this volume is not so vociferous as it is assured. Smoke-belching chimneys are here, quarries and great bowlders of iron-ribbed rock; here are titanic visions: the dreams of men and machinery. And silence is here—the silence of sleeping tenements and sun-soaked cornfields.

Slabs of the Sunburnt West (1923) is a fresh fusing: here in quick succession are the sardonic invectives of "And So Today," the rhapsody of "The Windy City" (an amplification of the early "Chicago"), and the panoramic title-poem. Although the book's chief exhibit is the amplitude of its longer poems, there are a few brevities (such as "Upstream") which have the vigor of a jubilant cry. Sandburg is still tempted to talk at the top of his voice, to bang the table and hurl his loudest epithets into the teeth of his opponents. But often he goes to the other extreme: he is likely to leave his material soft and loose instead of solidifying his emotions. There are times when the poet seems unsure whether or not he can furnish more than a clew to the half-realized wisps of his imagination. But though his meaning may not always be clear, there is no mistaking the power of his feeling nor the curious cadences of his music.

Good Morning, America (1928) is characteristically Sandburg at his best and worst. There are passages which are hopelessly enigmatic, passages which are only inflations of commonplace ideas. On the other hand, there are pages which are remarkable experiments in suspension, pages sensitive with a beauty delicately perceived. The thirty-eight "Tentative (First Model) Definitions

of Poetry" with which the volume is prefaced are footnotes as well as prologues to his work in general, and the purely descriptive pieces are among his finest. Incidentally, the volume shows how far Sandburg has gone in critical esteem since the time when his *Chicago Poems* was openly derided, the title poem of *Good Morning, America* having been read as a Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard.

Besides his poetry, Sandburg has written three volumes of imaginative and, if one can conceive of such a thing, humorously mystical tales for children: *Rootabaga Stories* (1922), *Rootabaga Pigeons* (1923) and *Potato Face* (1930), the last being—so the poet and publisher insist—tales for adults of all ages. A collection of the Rootabaga stories was illustrated by Peggy Bacon in 1929. Eight years were spent traveling and studying documents for his vitalized *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (1926), and assembling material for his collection of native folk-tunes *The American Songbag* (1927).

In 1924 the poet perfected a unique lecture—part recital, part singing of American folk-tunes, part "circus," as he describes it —which he continued to give throughout the country. Accompanied by his guitar, Sandburg brought new values to the reading of poetry. His low-toned footnotes were full of philosophic asides; even his definitions had a flavor peculiarly their own. Speaking of realism and romanticism, he once told the following fable: "There was a man who did not find in his house all he desired. One day he came in to find his wife working with a workbasket full of bright silk threads. He caught up a handful. He held them tight for a moment. Then he opened his hand. The threads became hundreds of brilliant butterflies flying joyfully about the room. The man watched them. Then he opened his hand, gathered them all in, tightened his hold. They became silk threads; he returned them to the workbasket. . . . And if you can believe that," Sandburg concluded with the ghost of a smile, "you are a romanticist."

Sandburg has been on the staff of the *Chicago Daily News* since 1919, and lives in Elmhurst, Illinois, near Chicago, and part of the year on the northern shore of Lake Michigan, "within earshot of frogs, silver peepers and evening waterfalls of songs."

TEN DEFINITIONS OF POETRY

1 Poetry is a projection across silence of cadences arranged to break that silence with definite intentions of echoes, syllables, wave lengths.

2 Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly the air.

3 Poetry is a series of explanations of life, fading off into horizons too swift for explanations.

4 Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable.

5 Poetry is a theorem of a yellow-silk handkerchief knotted with riddles, sealed in a balloon tied to the tail of a kite flying in a white wind against a blue sky in spring.

6 Poetry is the silence and speech between a wet struggling root of a flower and a sunlit blossom of that flower.

7 Poetry is the harnessing of the paradox of earth cradling life and then entombing it.

8 Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away.

9 Poetry is the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits.

10 Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.

CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:
They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding.
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

LIMITED

I am riding on a limited express, one of the crack trains of
the nation.
Hurtling across the prairie into blue haze and dark air go
fifteen all-steel coaches holding a thousand people.
(All the coaches shall be scrap and rust and all the men and
women laughing in the diners and sleepers shall pass to
ashes.)
I ask a man in the smoker where he is going and he answers:
"Omaha."

FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

"The Past is a Bucket of Ashes."

1

The woman named Tomorrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

2

The doors were cedar
and the panel strips of gold
and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:
We are the greatest city,
and the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.
The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
where the golden girls ran and the panels
read:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

3

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
to warble: We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang
and the strong men listened
and paid the singers well,
there were rats and lizards who listened
. . . and the only listeners left now
. . . are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.
And there are black crows
crying, "Caw, caw,"
bringing mud and sticks
building a nest
over the words carved
on the doors where the panels were cedar
and the strips on the panels were gold
and the golden girls came singing:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.

The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw,"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and the
lizards.

4

The feet of the rats
scribble on the doorsills;
the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
chatter the pedigrees of the rats
and babble of the blood
and gabble of the breed
of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
of the rats.

And the wind shifts
and the dust on a doorsill shifts
and even the writing of the rat footprints
tells us nothing, nothing at all
about the greatest city, the greatest nation
where the strong men listened
and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was.

A. E. F.[1]

There will be a rusty gun on the wall, sweetheart,
The rifle grooves curling with flakes of rust.
A spider will make a silver string nest in the darkest, warmest corner of it.
The trigger and the range-finder, they too will be rusty.
And no hands will polish the gun, and it will hang on the wall.
Forefingers and thumbs will point absently and casually toward it.
It will be spoken among half-forgotten, wished-to-be-forgotten things.
They will tell the spider: Go on, you're doing good work.

PRAYERS OF STEEL

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls;
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.

JAZZ FANTASIA

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos, sob on the long cool winding saxophones. Go to it, O jazzmen.

[1] American Expeditionary Force.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-husha-hush with the slippery sandpaper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome treetops, moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like a racing car slipping away from a motorcycle-cop, bang-bang! you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns, tin cans—make two people fight on the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down the stairs.

Can the rough stuff . . . Now a Mississippi steamboat pushes up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and the green lanterns calling to the high soft stars . . . a red moon rides on the humps of the low river hills. . . . Go to it, O jazzmen.

BLUE ISLAND INTERSECTION

Six street-ends come together here.
They feed people and wagons into the center.
In and out all day horses with thoughts of nose-bags,
Men with shovels, women with baskets and baby buggies.
Six ends of streets and no sleep for them all day.
The people and wagons come and go, out and in.
Triangles of banks and drug stores watch.
The policemen whistle, the trolley cars bump:
Wheels, wheels, feet, feet, all day.

In the false dawn when the chickens blink
And the east shakes a lazy baby toe at tomorrow,
And the east fixes a pink half-eye this way,
In the time when only one milk wagon crosses
These three streets, these six street-ends
It is the sleep time and they rest.
The triangle banks and drug stores rest.
The policeman is gone, his star and gun sleep.
The owl car blutters along in a sleep-walk.

FROM "SMOKE AND STEEL"

Smoke of the fields in spring is one,
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another.
Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battleship funnel,
They all go up in a line with a smokestack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist . . . of the wind.

If the north wind comes they run to the south.
If the west wind comes they run to the east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other.
Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves in autumn,
Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and blue,
By the oath of work they swear: "I know you."

Hunted and hissed from the center
Deep down long ago when God made us over,
Deep down are the cinders we came from—
You and I and our heads of smoke.
. . . . . .

Some of the smokes God dropped on the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our numbers;
Sing their dawns and sing their evenings,
Sing an old log-fire song:
You may put the damper up,
You may put the damper down,
The smoke goes up the chimney just the same.

Smoke of a city sunset skyline,
Smoke of a country dusk horizon—
They cross on the sky and count our years.
. . . . . .

Smoke of a brick-red dust
Winds on a spiral
Out of the stacks
For a hidden and glimpsing moon.
This, said the bar-iron shed to the blooming mill,
This is the slang of coal and steel.

The day-gang hands it to the night-gang,
The night-gang hands it back.

Stammer at the slang of this—
Let us understand half of it.
In the rolling mills and sheet mills,
In the harr and boom of the blast fires,
The smoke changes its shadow
And men change their shadow;
A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.

A bar of steel—it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran somewhere else,
And left smoke and the blood of a man
And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere else again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a nail, a shovel,
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear in the sky;
And always dark in the heart and through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary, they make their steel with men.

In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys
The smoke nights write their oaths:
Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel. . . .

LOSERS

If I should pass the tomb of Jonah
I would stop there and sit for a while;
Because I was swallowed one time deep in the dark
And came out alive after all.

If I pass the burial spot of Nero
I shall say to the wind, "Well, well!"—
I who have fiddled in a world on fire,
I who have done so many stunts not worth the doing.

I am looking for the grave of Sinbad too.
I want to shake his ghost-hand and say,
"Neither of us died very early, did we?"

And the last sleeping-place of Nebuchadnezzar—
When I arrive there I shall tell the wind:
"You ate grass; I have eaten crow—
Who is better off now or next year?"

Jack Cade, John Brown, Jesse James,
There too I could sit down and stop for a while.
I think I could tell their headstones:
"God, let me remember all good losers."

I could ask people to throw ashes on their heads
In the name of that sergeant at Belleau Woods,
Walking into the drumfires, calling his men,
"Come on, you . . . Do you want to live forever?"

PRIMER LESSON

Look out how you use proud words.
When you let proud words go, it is not easy to call them back.
They wear long boots, hard boots; they walk off proud; they can't hear you calling—
Look out how you use proud words.

BROKEN-FACE GARGOYLES

All I can give you is broken-face gargoyles.
It is too early to sing and dance at funerals,
Though I can whisper to you I am looking for an undertaker humming a lullaby and throwing his feet in a swift and mystic buck-and-wing, now you see it and now you don't.

Fish to swim a pool in your garden flashing a speckled silver,
A basket of wine-saps filling your room with flame-dark for your eyes and the tang of valley orchards for your nose,
Such a beautiful pail of fish, such a beautiful peck of apples, I cannot bring you now.
It is too early and I am not footloose yet.

I shall come in the night when I come with a hammer and saw.
I shall come near your window, where you look out when your eyes open in the morning,
And there I shall slam together bird-houses and bird-baths for wing-loose wrens and hummers to live in, birds with yellow wing tips to blur and buzz soft all summer.

So I shall make little fool homes with doors, always open doors for all and each to run away when they want to.
I shall come just like that even though now it is early and I am not yet footloose,
Even though I am still looking for an undertaker with a raw, wind-bitten face and a dance in his feet.
I make a date with you (put it down) for six o'clock in the evening a thousand years from now.

All I can give you now is broken-face gargoyles.
All I can give you now is a double gorilla head with two fish mouths and four eagle eyes hooked on a street wall, spouting water and looking two ways to the ends of the street for the new people, the young strangers, coming, coming, always coming.

It is early.
I shall yet be footloose.

FLASH CRIMSON

I shall cry God to give me a broken foot.

I shall ask for a scar and a slashed nose.

I shall take the last and the worst.

I shall be eaten by gray creepers in a bunkhouse where no runners of the sun come and no dogs live.

And yet—of all "and yets" this is the bronze strongest—

I shall keep one thing better than all else; there is the blue steel of a great star of early evening in it; it lives longer than a broken foot or any scar.

The broken foot goes to a hole dug with a shovel or the bone of a nose may whiten on a hilltop—and yet—"and yet"—

There is one crimson pinch of ashes left after all; and none of the shifting winds that whip the grass and none of the pounding rains that beat the dust know how to touch or find the flash of this crimson.

I cry to God to give me a broken foot, a scar, or a lousy death.

I who have seen the flash of this crimson, I ask God for the last and worst.

EARLY LYNCHING

Two Christs were at Golgotha.
One took the vinegar, another looked on.
One was on the cross, another in the mob.
One had the nails in his hands, another the stiff fingers holding a hammer driving nails.
There were many more Christs at Golgotha, many more thief pals, many many more in the mob howling the Judean equivalent of "Kill Him! Kill Him!"
The Christ they killed, the Christ they didn't kill, those were the two at Golgotha.

Pity, pity, the bones of these broken ankles.
Pity, pity, the slimp of these broken wrists
The mother's arms are strong to the last.
She holds him and counts the heart drips.

The smell of the slums was on him,
Wrongs of the slums lit his eyes.
Songs of the slums wove in his voice
The haters of the slums hated his slum heart.

The leaves of a mountain tree,
Leaves with a spinning star shook in them,
Rocks with a song of water, water, over them,
Hawks with an eye for death any time, any time,
The smell and the sway of these were on his sleeves, were in his nostrils, his words.

The slum man they killed, the mountain man lives on.

PRECIOUS MOMENTS

Bright vocabularies are transient as rainbows.
Speech requires blood and air to make it.
Before the word comes off the end of the tongue,
While the diaphragms of flesh negotiate the word,
In the moment of doom when the word forms
It is born, alive, registering an imprint—
Afterward it is a mummy, a dry fact, done and gone,
The warning holds yet: Speak now or forever hold your peace.
Ecce homo had meanings: Behold the man! Look at him!
Dying he lives and speaks!

MOIST MOON PEOPLE

The moon is able to command the valley tonight.
The green mist shall go a-roaming, the white river shall go a-roaming.
Yet the moon shall be commanding, the moon shall take a high stand on the sky.

When the cats crept up the gullies,
And the goats fed at the rim a-laughing,
When the spiders swept their rooms in the burr oaks,
And the katydids first searched for this year's accordions,
And the crickets began a-looking for last year's concertinas—

I was there, I saw that hour, I know God had grand intentions about it.
If not, why did the moon command the valley, the green mist and white river go a-roaming, and the moon by itself take so high a stand on the sky?

If God and I alone saw it, the show was worth putting on,
Yet I remember others were there, Amos and Priscilla, Axel and Hulda, Hank and Jo, Big Charley and Little Morningstar.
They were all there; the clock ticks spoke with castanet clicks.

BUNDLES

I have thought of beaches, fields,
Tears, laughter.

I have thought of homes put up—
And blown away.

I have thought of meetings and for
Every meeting a good-by.

I have thought of stars going alone,
Orioles in pairs, sunsets in blundering
Wistful deaths.

I have wanted to let go and cross over
To a next star, a last star.

I have asked to be left a few tears
And some laughter.

UPSTREAM

The strong men keep coming on,
They go down shot, hanged, sick, broken.
They live on fighting, singing, lucky as plungers.
The strong mothers pulling them on . . .
The strong mothers pulling them from a dark sea, a great prairie, a long mountain.
Call hallelujah, call amen, call deep thanks.
The strong men keep coming on.

FOR YOU

The peace of great doors be for you.
Wait at the knobs, at the panel oblongs;
Wait for the great hinges.

The peace of great churches be for you,
Where the players of lofty pipe-organs
Practice old lovely fragments, alone.

The peace of great books be for you,
Stains of pressed clover leaves on pages,
Bleach of the light of years held in leather.

The peace of great prairies be for you.
Listen among windplayers in cornfields,
The wind leaning over its oldest music.

The peace of great seas be for you.
Wait on a hook of land, a rock footing
For you, wait in the salt wash.

The peace of great mountains be for you,
The sleep and the eyesight of eagles,
Sheet mist shadows and the long look across.

The peace of great hearts be for you,
Valves of the blood of the sun,
Pumps of the strongest wants we cry.

The peace of great silhouettes be for you,
Shadow dancers alive in your blood now,
Alive and crying, "Let us out, let us out."

The peace of great changes be for you.
Whispers, oh beginners in the hills.
Tumble, oh cubs—tomorrow belongs to you.

The peace of great loves be for you.
Rain, soak these roots; wind, shatter the dry rot.
Bars of sunlight, grips of the earth; hug these.

The peace of great ghosts be for you,
Phantoms of night-gray eyes, ready to go
To the fog-star dumps, to the fire-white doors.

Yes, the peace of great phantoms be for you,
Phantom iron men, mothers of bronze,
Keepers of the lean clean breeds.

ADELAIDE CRAPSEY

Adelaide Crapsey, daughter of the famous minister, Algernon S. Crapsey, was born, September 9, 1878, in Rochester, New York, where she spent her childhood. She entered Vassar College in 1897, graduating with the class of 1901. Two years after graduation she began work as a teacher of History and Literature, in Kemper Hall, Kenosha, Wisconsin, where she had attended preparatory school. In 1905 she went abroad, studying archeology in Rome. After her return she tried to teach again, but her failing health compelled her to discontinue and though she became instructor in Poetics at Smith College in 1911, the burden was too great for her.

Prior to this time she had written little verse, her chief work being an analysis of English metrics, an investigation (which she never finished) of problems in verse structure. In 1913, after her breakdown, she began to write those brief lines which are so precise and poignant, most of her tiny volume being composed during the last few months of her life. She was particularly happy in her "Cinquains," a form which she originated. These five-line stanzas in the strictest possible pattern (the lines having, respectively, two, four, six, eight and two syllables) doubtless owe something to the Japanese *hokku*, but Adelaide Crapsey saturated them with her own fragile loveliness.

"Her death," writes Claude Bragdon, who was not only her friend but her first publisher, "was tragic. Full of the desire of life she was forced to go, leaving her work all unfinished. Her last year was spent in exile at Saranac. From her window she looked down on the graveyard—'Trudeau's Garden,' she called it, with grim-gay irony. Here, forbidden the work her metrical study entailed, these poems grew—flowers of a battlefield of the spirit." She died at Saranac Lake, New York, on October 8, 1914. Her small volume *Verse* appeared in 1915, and a part of the unfinished *Study in English Metrics* was posthumously published in 1918. A second edition of *Verse* with a few additional poems appeared in

1922. An unconscious Imagist, she gave fragility a firmness which saved the smallest of her designs from preciosity.

FIVE CINQUAINS

NOVEMBER NIGHT

Listen . . .
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS[1]

"Why do
You thus devise
Evil against her?" "For that
She is beautiful, delicate.
Therefore."

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

NIAGARA

(*Seen on a night in November*)

How frail
Above the bulk
Of crashing water hangs,
Autumnal, evanescent, wan,
The moon.

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 380.

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind hath blown?

VENDOR'S SONG

My songs to sell, good sir!
  I pray you buy.
Here's one will win a lady's tears,
  Here's one will make her gay,
Here's one will charm your true love true
  Forever and a day;
Good sir, I pray you buy!

Oh, no, he will not buy.

My songs to sell, sweet maid!
  I pray you buy.
This one will teach you Lilith's lore,
  And this what Helen knew,
And this will keep your gold hair gold,
  And this your blue eyes blue;
Sweet maid, I pray you buy!

Oh, no, she will not buy.

If I'd as much money as I could tell,
I never would cry my songs to sell.
I never would cry my songs to sell.

THE LONELY DEATH

In the cold I will rise, I will bathe
In waters of ice; myself
Will shiver and shrive myself,
Alone in the dawn, and anoint
Forehead and feet and hands;
I will shutter the windows from light,
I will place in their sockets the four

Tall candles and set them a-flame
In the gray of the dawn; and myself
Will lay myself straight in my bed,
And draw the sheet up under my chin.

SONG

I make my shroud, but no one knows—
So shimmering fine it is and fair,
With stitches set in even rows.
I make my shroud, but no one knows.

In door-way where the lilac blows,
Humming a little wandering air,
I make my shroud and no one knows,
So shimmering fine it is and fair.

DIRGE

Never the nightingale,
Oh, my dear,
Never again the lark
Thou wilt hear;
Though dusk and the morning still
Tap at thy window-sill,
Though ever love call and call
Thou wilt not hear at all,
My dear, my dear.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

Grace Hazard Conkling was born in 1878 in New York City. After graduating from Smith College in 1899, she studied music at the University of Heidelberg (1902-3) and Paris (1903-4). Since 1914 she has been a teacher of English at Smith College, where she has done much to create an eager interest in poetry.

Mrs. Conkling's *Afternoons of April* (1915) and *Wilderness Songs* (1920) contain a graciousness that rarely grows cloying. Gentle colors and a gentler sadness are here; soft music, the whisper of flutes above a plaintive English horn, floats from her pages. But the poems are by no means monotonous. A fragrant whimsicality, a childlike freshness vivifies poems like "The Whole Duty of Berkshire Brooks," "Dilemma" and "Frost on a Window,"

which reminds one of the manner of her precocious daughter, Hilda (see page 819).

Ship's Log (1924) and *Witch and Other Poems* (1929) are more uneven collections. They have variety and alertness in their favor, but are handicapped by an overambitious program; the poems call for prodigal tropicalities, but Mrs. Conkling cannot splash color about as boldly as the poems promise. Nevertheless the echoes of Amy Lowell and Robert Frost do not drown the poet's clarinet-like, though sometimes uncertain, tone.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF BERKSHIRE BROOKS

To build the trout a crystal stair;
To comb the hillside's thick green hair;
To water jewel-weed and rushes;
To teach first notes to baby thrushes;
To flavor raspberry and apple
And make a whirling pool to dapple
With scattered gold of late October;
To urge wise laughter on the sober
And lend a dream to those who laugh;
To chant the beetle's epitaph;
To mirror the blue dragonfly,
Frail air-plane of a slender sky;
Over the stones to lull and leap
Herding the bubbles like white sheep;
The claims of worry to deny,
And whisper sorrow into sleep!

FROST ON A WINDOW

This forest looks the way
Nightingales sound.
Tall larches lilt and sway
Above the glittering ground:
The wild white cherry spray
Scatters radiance round.

The chuckle of the nightingale
Is like this elfin wood.
Even as his gleaming trills assail
The spirit's solitude,
These leaves of light, these branches frail
Are music's very mood.

The song of these fantastic trees,
The plumes of frost they wear,
Are for the poet's whim who sees
Through a deceptive air,
And has an ear for melodies
When never a sound is there.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

James Branch Cabell was born in Richmond, Virginia, April 14, 1879. He taught French and Greek for two years at William and Mary College (1896-7), worked in the pressroom of the Richmond *Times* (1898), was on the staff of the New York *Herald* (1899-1901), and began contributing to the magazines in 1902, writing over sixty short stories as well as scattered essays, translations and papers on historical and biographical subjects.

Although Cabell likes to describe himself as a genealogist, he is the author of some of the most exquisite prose in contemporary literature. In books like *The Certain Hour* (1916), *The Cream of the Jest* (1917), *Jurgen* (1919), the poetry-crammed "comedy of appearances," *Figures of Earth* (1921), and indubitably in *The Silver Stallion* (1926) the composite Cabell hero emerges, triumphant in the midst of his defeats—the eternally disillusioned, eternally hopeful Jurgen-Charteris-Kennaston: a symbol of the human soul seeking some sort of finality, some assurance in a world of illimitable perplexities.

Though Cabell is best known as a novelist, his books are liberally dotted with original verses that do duty as chapter-headings, mottoes, tail-pieces, interpolated songs and epilogues. A complete volume of his verse, *From the Hidden Way* (1916), bore the subtitle "Being Seventy-Five Adaptations." It purported to be paraphrases from such forgotten troubadours as Allesandro de Medici, Antoine Riczi, Charles Garnier and half a dozen other obscure Parnassians. Cabell "quoted" the first lines of each of their poems in the original Latin, French or Provençal. Even after the hoax was exposed, it was difficult for most readers to believe that the entire collection—names, references, first lines in the "original" and all—was the creation of Cabell, the masquerader. In *From the Hidden Way*, the romancer added another story to that gem-studded ivory tower in which Cabell lives and escapes the modern world. Whether he echoes the medieval ballata or the more modern rondeau, roundel and sonnet, whether he employs prose or verse as his medium, his is an artifice firmly erected upon art.

Cabellian Harmonics (1928) by Warren A. McNeill is a minute

study of the symphonic plan of Cabell's prose-poetry, its intricate hexameters, recurrent rhythms and contrapuntal effects.

SEA-SCAPES

I lie and dream in the soft warm sand; and the thunder and surge and the baffled roar
Of the sea's relentless and vain endeavors are a pleasant lullaby, here on shore.

Since a little hillock screens yonder ageless, tenacious battlings (which shatter, and pass
In foam and spume), I appraise, half-nodding, much sand and sky and gaunt nodding grass.

And I am content to lie and dream; and I am too drowsy to rise and see
If it be worth breasting—that ocean yonder, which a little hillock hides from me.

ONE END OF LOVE

"It is long since we met," she said.
I answered, "Yes."

She is not fair,
But very old now, and no gold
Gleams in that scant gray withered hair
Where once much gold was: and, I think,
Not easily might one bring tears
Into her eyes, which have become
Like dusty glass.

"'Tis thirty years,"
I said. "And then the war came on
Apace, and our young King had need
Of men to serve him oversea
Against the heathen. For their greed,
Puffed up at Tunis, troubles him—"
She said: "This week my son is gone
To him at Paris with his men."
And then: "You never married, John?"

I answered, "No." And so we sate
Musing a while.

Then with his guests
Came Robert; and his thin voice broke
Upon my dream, with the old jests,
No food for laughter now: and swore
We must be friends now that our feud
Was overpast.

"We are grown old—
Eh, John?" he said. "And, by the Rood!
'Tis time we were at peace with God
Who are not long for this world."

"Yea,"
I answered; "we are old." And then,
Remembering that April day
At Calais, and that hawthorn field
Wherein we fought long since, I said:
"We are friends now."

And she sate by,
Scarce heeding. Thus the evening sped.

And we ride homeward now, and I
Ride moodily; my palfrey jogs
Along a rock-strewn way the moon
Lights up for us; yonder the bogs
Are curdled with thin ice; the trees
Are naked; from the barren wold
The wind comes like a blade aslant
Across a world grown very old.

FLOTSAM

We did not share the same inheritance,—
I and this woman, five years older than I,
Yet daughter of a later century,—
Who is therefore only wearied by that dance
Which has set my blood a-leaping.

It is queer
To note how kind her face grows, listening
To my wild talk, and plainly pitying
My callow youth, and seeing in me a dear
Amusing boy,—yet somehow old to be
Still reading *Alice through the Looking-glass*
And *Water Babies* . . .

With light talk we pass.

And I that have lived long in Arcady—
I that have kept so many a foolish tryst,
And written driveling rhymes—feel stirring in me
Droll pity for this woman who pities me,
And whose weak mouth so many men have kissed.

VACHEL LINDSAY

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay was born in Springfield, Illinois, November 10, 1879. His home for many years was next door to the executive mansion of the State of Illinois; from the window where Lindsay did most of his writing, he saw governors come and go, including the martyred John P. Altgeld, whom he has celebrated in one of his finest poems. He graduated from the Springfield High School, attended Hiram College (1897-1900), studied at the Art Institute at Chicago (1900-3) and at the New York School of Art (1904). After two years of lecturing and settlement work, he took the first of his long tramps, walking through Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, preaching "the gospel of beauty," and formulating his unique plans for a communal art. (See Preface.) During the following five years, Lindsay made several of these trips, traveling as a combination missionary and minstrel. Like a true revivalist, he attempted to wake in the people he met a response to beauty, distributing a little pamphlet entitled "Rhymes to be Traded for Bread."

Lindsay began to create more poetry to reach the public—all of his verse being written in his rôle of apostle. He was, primarily, a rhyming John the Baptist singing to convert the heathen, to stimulate and encourage the half-hearted dreams that hide and are smothered in sordid villages and townships. But the great audiences he was endeavoring to reach did not hear him, even though his collection *General Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1913) struck many a loud and racy note.

Lindsay broadened his effects, developed the chant, and, the

following year, published his *The Congo and Other Poems* (1914), an infectious blend of rhyme, religion and rag-time. In the title poem and, in a lesser degree, the three companion chants, Lindsay struck his most powerful—and most popular—vein. It gave people (particularly when intoned aloud) that primitive joy in syncopated sound that is at the very base of song. In these experiments in breaking down the barriers between poetry and music, Lindsay (obviously infected by the echolalia of Poe's "Bells") tried to create what he called a "Higher Vaudeville" imagination, carrying the form back to the old Greek precedent where every line was half-spoken, half-sung.

Lindsay's innovation succeeded at once. The novelty, the speed, the clatter, forced the attention of people who had never paid the slightest heed to the poet's quieter verses. Men heard the *sounds* of hurtling America in these lines even when they were deaf to its spirit. They failed to see that, beneath the noise of "The Kallyope Yell" and "The Santa Fé Trail," Lindsay was partly an admirer, partly an ironical critic of the shrieking energy of these states. By his effort to win the enemy over, Lindsay had persuaded the proverbially tired business man to listen at last. But, in overstressing the vaudeville features, there arose the danger of Lindsay the poet being lost in Lindsay the entertainer. The sympathetic celebration of Negro spirits and psychology (seen at their best in "The Congo," "John Brown" and "Simon Legree") degenerated into the crude buffooneries of "The Daniel Jazz" and "The Blacksmith's Serenade." The three bracketed poems, and a few others, are certain of a place in the history of American poetry.

Lindsay's earnestness, keyed up by an exuberant fancy, saved him. *The Chinese Nightingale* (1917) begins with one of the most whimsical rhymes Lindsay has ever devised. This title-poem is his finest piece of sheer texture. And if the subsequent *The Golden Whales of California* (1920) is less distinctive, it is principally because the author has written too much and too speedily to be self-critical. It is his peculiar appraisal of loveliness, the rollicking high spirits joined to a stubborn evangelism, that makes Lindsay so representative a product of his environment.

Collected Poems (1923) is a complete and almost cruel exhibit of Lindsay's best and worst. That Lindsay had lost whatever faculty of self-appraisal he may have possessed is evidenced by page after page of crudities; verses are propelled by nothing more than physical energy whipping up a trivial idea. What mars so much of this writing is Lindsay's attempt to give every wisp of fantasy a cosmic or at least a national significance. Thus that intoxicating chant "The Ghosts of the Buffaloes" appears in the later edition with an unfortunate appendage, an irrelevant hortatory

appeal beginning, "Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all!" But, in spite of the fact that the poet suffers from a complex of undiscriminating patriotism, a curious hero-worship which makes him link Woodrow Wilson with Socrates, his very catholicity is representative of a great part of his country. *Going to the Sun* (1924), *Going to the Stars* (1925) and *The Candle in the Cabin* (1926), following each other in too rapid succession, betray Lindsay's uncritical loquacity. These volumes are distinguished chiefly by the whimsical drawings which the poet has scattered among the feeble verses. His subsequent prose is far better. *The Litany of Washington Street* (1929), described as "a kind of Washington's birthday, Lincoln's birthday, Whitman's birthday, Jefferson's birthday book," is a set of Fourth of July orations on an idealized Main Street stretching from Connecticut to Calcutta.

Much of Lindsay will die; he will not live as either a prophet or a politician. But the vitality which impels the best of his galloping meters will persist; his innocent wildness of imagination, outlasting his naïve programs, will charm even those to whom his declamations are no longer a novelty. His gospel is no less original for being preached through a saxophone.

Besides his original poetry, Lindsay has embodied his experiences and meditations on the road in two prose volumes, *A Handy Guide for Beggars* (1916) and *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty* (1914), as well as an enthusiastic study of the "silent drama," *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915). A curious document, half rhapsody, half visionary novel, entitled *The Golden Book of Springfield*, appeared in 1920. He died December 4, 1931.

THE CONGO

(*A Study of the Negro Race*)

I. Their Basic Savagery

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, *A deep rolling bass.*
Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, Boom,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom.

THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision. *More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.*
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong. *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket.*
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,
Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune *With a philosophic pause.*
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant, *Shrilly and with a heavily accented meter.*
Torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
HOO, HOO, HOO. *Like the wind in the chimney.*
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell.
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
"Be careful what you do,

Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

All the o sounds, very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered.

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM. . . .
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
A negro fairyland swung into view,
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky,
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic-land.
A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yes, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.

Rather shrill and high.

Read exactly as in first section.

Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.

With pomposity.

But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes,
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Shoes with a patent leather shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there,
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown
Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile).

With a great deliberation and ghostliness.

With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.

With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
Boom."
O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.

Slow philosophic calm.

III. The Hope of their Religion

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed their hymn-books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

Exactly as in the first section.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.
In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

Then along that river, a thousand miles,
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.

With growing deliberation and joy.

There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation;
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

In a rather high key—as delicately as possible.

To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . . hoo-doo . . . you."

Dying off into a penetrating, terrified whisper.

TO A GOLDEN-HAIRED GIRL IN A LOUISIANA TOWN

You are a sunrise,
If a star should rise instead of the sun.
You are a moonrise,
If a star should come in the place of the moon.
You are the Spring,
If a face should bloom instead of an apple-bough.
You are my love,
If your heart is as kind
As your young eyes now.

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

(To be sung to the tune of "The Blood of the Lamb" with indicated instruments)

I

(*Bass drum beaten loudly.*)
Booth led boldly with his big bass drum—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

The Saints smiled gravely and they said: "He's come."
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail:—
Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death—
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

(*Banjos.*)
Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over. (Booth had groaned for more.)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang:—
"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare, blare
On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

II

(*Bass drum slower and softer.*)
Booth died blind and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief,
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

(*Sweet flute music.*)
Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house square.
Yet in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.

(*Bass drum louder.*)
Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

(*Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground.*)
The hosts were sandaled, and their wings were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Oh, shout Salvation! It was good to see
Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

(*Reverently sung, no instruments.*)
And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down.
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN

(*John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902*)

Sleep softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced,
They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,
Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her pittance, the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began,
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

THE GHOSTS OF THE BUFFALOES

Last night at black midnight I woke with a cry,
The windows were shaking, there was thunder on high,
The floor was a-tremble, the door was a-jar,
White fires, crimson fires, shone from afar.
I rushed to the dooryard. The city was gone.
My home was a hut without orchard or lawn.
It was mud-smear and logs near a whispering stream,
Nothing else built by man could I see in my dream . . .

Then . . .
Ghost-kings came headlong, row upon row,
Gods of the Indians, torches aglow.
They mounted the bear and the elk and the deer,
And eagles gigantic, aged and sere,
They rode long-horn cattle, they cried "A-la-la."
They lifted the knife, the bow and the spear,
They lifted ghost-torches from dead fires below,
The midnight made grand with the cry "A-la-la."

The midnight made grand with a red-god charge,
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
"A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

With bodies like bronze, and terrible eyes
Came the rank and the file, with catamount cries,
Gibbering, yipping, with hollow-skull clacks,
Riding white bronchos with skeleton backs,
Scalp-hunters, beaded and spangled and bad,
Naked and lustful and foaming and mad,
Flashing primeval demoniac scorn,
Blood-thirst and pomp amid darkness reborn,
Power and glory that sleep in the grass
While the winds and the snows and the great rains pass.
They crossed the gray river, thousands abreast,
They rode out in infinite lines to the west,
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

And the wind crept by
Alone, unkempt, unsatisfied,
The wind cried and cried—
Muttered of massacres long past,
Buffaloes in shambles vast . . .
An owl said, "Hark, what is a-wing?"
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket caroling.

Then . . .
Snuffing the lightning that crashed from on high
Rose royal old buffaloes, row upon row.
The lords of the prairie came galloping by.
And I cried in my heart "A-la-la, a-la-la.
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

Buffaloes, buffaloes, thousands abreast,
A scourge and amazement, they swept to the west.
With black bobbing noses, with red rolling tongues,
Coughing forth steam from their leather-wrapped lungs,
Cows with their calves, bulls big and vain,
Goring the laggards, shaking the mane,
Stamping flint feet, flashing moon eyes,
Pompous and owlish, shaggy and wise.

Life sea-cliffs and caves resounded their ranks
With shoulders like waves, and undulant flanks.
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

I heard a cricket's cymbals play,
A scarecrow lightly flapped his rags,
And a pan that hung by his shoulder rang,
Rattled and thumped in a listless way,
And now the wind in the chimney sang,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
Seemed to say:—
"Dream, boy, dream,
If you anywise can.
To dream is the work
Of beast or man.
Life is the west-going dream-storm's breath,
Life is a dream, the sigh of the skies,
The breath of the stars, that nod on their pillows
With their golden hair mussed over their eyes."
The locust played on his musical wing,
Sang to his mate of love's delight.
I heard the whippoorwill's soft fret.
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket say: "Good-night, good-night,
Good-night, good-night, . . . good-night."

THE TRAVELER

The moon's a devil jester
Who makes himself too free.
The rascal is not always
Where he appears to be.
Sometimes he is in my heart—
Sometimes he is in the sea;
Then tides are in my heart,
And tides are in the sea.

O traveler, abiding not
Where he pretends to be!

A NEGRO SERMON: SIMON LEGREE

Legree's big house was white and green.
His cotton-fields were the best to be seen.
He had strong horses and opulent cattle,
And bloodhounds bold, with chains that would rattle.
His garret was full of curious things:
Books of magic, bags of gold,
And rabbits' feet on long twine strings,
But he went down to the Devil.

Legree, he sported a brass-buttoned coat,
A snake-skin necktie, a blood-red shirt.
Legree, he had a beard like a goat,
And a thick hairy neck, and eyes like dirt.
His puffed-out cheeks were fish-belly white,
He had great long teeth, and an appetite.
He ate raw meat, 'most every meal,
And rolled his eyes till the cat would squeal.
His fist was an enormous size
To mash poor niggers that told him lies:
He was surely a witch-man in disguise.
But he went down to the Devil.

He wore hip-boots, and would wade all day
To capture his slaves that had fled away.

But he went down to the Devil.
He beat poor Uncle Tom to death
Who prayed for Legree with his last breath.
Then Uncle Tom to Eva flew,
To the high sanctoriums bright and new;
And Simon Legree stared up beneath,
And cracked his heels, and ground his teeth:
And went down to the Devil.
He crossed the yard in the storm and gloom;
He went into his grand front room.
He said, "I killed him, and I don't care."
He kicked a hound, he gave a swear;
He tightened his belt, he took a lamp,
Went down cellar to the webs and damp.
There in the middle of the moldy floor
He heaved up a slab; he found a door—
And went down to the Devil.

His lamp blew out, but his eyes burned bright.
Simon Legree stepped down all night—
Down, down to the Devil.
Simon Legree he reached the place,
He saw one half of the human race,
He saw the Devil on a wide green throne,
Gnawing the meat from a big ham-bone,
And he said to Mister Devil:
"I see that you have much to eat—
A red ham-bone is surely sweet.
I see that you have lion's feet;
I see your frame is fat and fine,
I see you drink your poison wine—
Blood and burning turpentine."

And the Devil said to Simon Legree:
"I like your style, so wicked and free.
Come sit and share my throne with me,
And let us bark and revel."
And there they sit and gnash their teeth,
And each one wears a hop-vine wreath.
They are matching pennies and shooting craps,
They are playing poker and taking naps.

And old Legree is fat and fine:
He eats the fire, he drinks the wine—
Blood and burning turpentine—
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil;
Down, down with the Devil.

JOHN BROWN

(To be sung by a leader and chorus, the leader singing the body of the poem, while the chorus interrupts with the question)

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
I saw the ark of Noah—
It was made of pitch and pine.
I saw old Father Noah
Asleep beneath his vine.
I saw Shem, Ham and Japhet
Standing in a line.
I saw the tower of Babel
In the gorgeous sunrise shine—
By a weeping willow tree
Beside the Dead Sea.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
I saw abominations
And Gadarene swine.
I saw the sinful Canaanites
Upon the shewbread dine,
And spoil the temple vessels
And drink the temple wine.
I saw Lot's wife, a pillar of salt
Standing in the brine—
By a weeping willow tree
Beside the Dead Sea.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
Cedars on Mount Lebanon,
Gold in Ophir's mine,

And a wicked generation
Seeking for a sign.
And Baal's howling worshipers
Their god with leaves entwine.
And . . .
I saw the war-horse ramping
And shake his forelock fine—
By a weeping willow tree
Beside the Dead Sea.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
Old John Brown.
Old John Brown.
I saw his gracious wife
Dressed in a homespun gown.
I saw his seven sons
Before his feet bow down.
And he marched with his seven sons,
His wagons and goods and guns,
To his campfire by the sea,
By the waves of Galilee.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
I saw the harp and psalt'ry
Played for Old John Brown.
I heard the ram's horn blow,
Blow for Old John Brown.
I saw the Bulls of Bashan—
They cheered for Old John Brown.
I saw the big Behemoth—
He cheered for Old John Brown.
I saw the big Leviathan—
He cheered for Old John Brown.
I saw the Angel Gabriel
Great power to him assign.
I saw him fight the Canaanites
And set God's Israel free.
I saw him when the war was done
In his rustic chair recline—

By his campfire by the sea
By the waves of Galilee.

I've been to Palestine.
What did you see in Palestine?
Old John Brown.
Old John Brown.
And there he sits
To judge the world.
His hunting-dogs
At his feet are curled.
His eyes half-closed,
But John Brown sees
The ends of the earth,
The Day of Doom.
And his shot-gun lies
Across his knees—
Old John Brown,
Old John Brown.

THE DOVE OF NEW SNOW

I give you a house of snow,
I give you the flag of the wind above it,
I give you snow-bushes
In a long row,
I give you a snow-dove,
And ask you
To love it.

The snow-dove flies in
At the snow-house window,
He is a ghost
And he casts no shadow.
His cry is the cry of love
From the meadow,
The meadow of snow where we walked in a glow,
The glittering, angelic meadow.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT[1]

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long,
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks of men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why;
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
A league of sober folk, the workers' earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

[1] See pages 105, 163, 189, 334, 349, 354, 467.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

THE FLOWER-FED BUFFALOES

The flower-fed buffaloes of the spring
In the days of long ago,
Ranged where the locomotives sing
And the prairie flowers lie low;
The tossing, blooming, perfumed grass
Is swept away by wheat,
Wheels and wheels and wheels spin by
In the spring that still is sweet.
But the flower-fed buffaloes of the spring
Left us long ago.
They gore no more, they bellow no more,
They trundle around the hills no more:—
With the Blackfeet lying low,
With the Pawnees lying low.

WHEN LINCOLN CAME TO SPRINGFIELD[1]

When Lincoln came to Springfield,
In the ancient days,
Queer were the streets and sketchy,
And he was in a maze.

Leaving log cabins behind him.
For the mud streets of this place,
Sorrow for Anne Rutledge
Burned in his face.

He threw his muddy saddle bags
On Joshua Speed's floor,
He took off his old hat,
He looked around the store.

[1] See pages 105, 163, 189, 333, 349, 354, 467.

He shook his long hair
On his bison-head,
He sat down on the counter,
"Speed, I've moved," he said.

THE VOYAGE

What is my mast? A pen.
What are my sails? Ten crescent moons.
What is my sea? A bottle of ink.
Where do I go? To heaven again.
What do I eat? The amaranth flower,
While the winds through the jungles think old tunes.
I eat that flower with ivory spoons
While the winds through the jungles play old tunes;
The songs the angels used to sing
When heaven was not old autumn, but spring—
The bold, old songs of heaven and spring.

THE CHINESE NIGHTINGALE

(A Song in Chinese Tapestries)

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead—
Ended license, lust and play:
Why do you iron the night away?
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round,
While the monster shadows glower and creep,
What can be better for man than sleep?"

"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;
"My breast with vision is satisfied,
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."
Then he lit five firecrackers in a pan,
"Pop, pot," said the firecrackers, "cra-cra-crack."
He lit a joss stick long and black.
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;

On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,
And this was the song of the gray small bird:
"Where is the princess, loved forever,
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,
And there on the snowy table wide
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face. . . .
Yet she put away all form and pride,
And laid her glimmering veil aside
With a childlike smile for Chang and me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,
Ironed and ironed, all alone.
And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:
"Have you forgotten . . .
Deep in the ages, long, long ago,
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?
We sold our grain in the peacock town—
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown—
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown. . . .
When all the world was drinking blood
From the skulls of men and bulls
And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,
We drank our tea in China beneath the sacred spice-trees,
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his caroling.
Do you remember, ages after,
At last the world we were born to own?
You were the heir of the yellow throne—
The world was the field of the Chinese man
And we were the pride of the Sons of Han?

We copied deep books and we carved in jade,
And wove blue silks in the mulberry shade. . . ."

"I remember, I remember
That Spring came on forever,
That Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,
Though dawn was bringing the western day,
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing away, . . .
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,
The railroad-yard and the clock-tower bright,
Demon clouds crossed ancient valleys;
Across wide lotus-ponds of light
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,
Flourished her fan, her shimmering fan,
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:
"Do you remember,
Ages after,
Our palace of heart-red stone?
Do you remember
The little doll-faced children
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,
That came from all the empire
Honoring the throne?—
The loveliest fête and carnival
Our world had ever known?
The sages sat about us
With their heads bowed in their beards,
With proper meditation on the sight.
Confucius was not born;
We lived in those great days
Confucius later said were lived aright. . . .
And this gray bird, on that day of Spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his caroling.
Late at night his tune was spent.

Peasants,
Sages,
Children,
Homeward went,
And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.
We walked alone. Our hearts were high and free.
I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,
I had a silvery name—do you remember
The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim—
He bent to his work, ironing away;
But she was arch, and knowing and glowing,
For the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . . darling . . ."
Said the Chinese nightingale.

The great gray joss on the rustic shelf,
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,
Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:
"Back through a hundred, hundred years
Hear the waves as they climb the piers,
Hear the howl of the silver seas,
Hear the thunder.
Hear the gongs of holy China
How the waves and tunes combine
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,
Incantation old and fine:
'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons,
Red firecrackers, and green firecrackers
And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.'"

Then the lady, rosy-red,
Turned to her lover Chang and said:
"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn
When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,
And worked a spell this great joss taught
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?
From the flag high over our palace home
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—

A king of beauty and tempest and thunder
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder.
A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.
We mounted the back of that royal slave
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.
We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,
We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.
To our secret ivory house we were borne.
We looked down the wonderful wind-filled regions
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist
That we this hour regain—
Song-fire for the brain.
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,
When you cried for your heart's new pain,
What was my name in the dragon-mist,
In the rings of the rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Sang the Chinese nightingale,
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—
Ere you returned to the shining harbor
There were pirates by ten thousand
Descended on the town
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;
I stood upon the sand;
With lifted hand I looked upon them
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.
Deep, deep below the bay, the seaweed and the spray,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies."

Then this did the noble lady say:
"Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day
When you flew like a courier on before
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,
And we drove the steed in your singing path—
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath:
And found our city all aglow,
And knighted this joss that decked it so?
There were golden fishes in the purple river
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.
There were golden junks in the laughing river,
And silver junks and rainbow junks:
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies,
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town
By the black-lacquer gate
Where walked in state
The kind king Chang
And his sweetheart mate. . . .
With his flag-born dragon
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade,
And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,
And priests who bowed them down to your song—
By the city called Han, the peacock town,
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,
The nightingale town."

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,
A vague, unraveling, final tune,
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;
Sang as though for the soul of him
Who ironed away in that bower dim:—
"I have forgotten
Your dragons great,
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.
I vaguely know
There were heroes of old,
Troubles more than the heart could hold,

There were wolves in the woods
Yet lambs in the fold,
Nests in the top of the almond tree. . . .
The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree.
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,
Years and years I but half-remember . . .
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,
May and June, then dead December,
Dead December, then again June.
Who shall end my dream's confusion?
Life is a loom, leaving illusion. . . .
I remember, I remember
There were ghostly veils and laces. . . .
In the shadowy bowery places. . . .
With lovers' ardent faces
Bending to one another,
Speaking each his part.
They infinitely echo
In the red cave of my heart.
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart,'
They said to one another.
They spoke, I think, of perils past.
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.
One thing I remember;
Spring came on forever,
Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

MELVILLE CANE

Melville Cane was born April 15, 1879, at Plattsburg, New York. He was educated at Columbia Grammar School, received his A.B. at Columbia in 1900, LL.B. in 1903. At Columbia he was editor-in-chief of the Literary Monthly, writing the lyrics of the Varsity operetta, the music of which was supplied by John Erskine. While still in college he contributed light verse to *Puck*, *Judge* and the more sedate *Century* and was a reporter on the *New York Evening Post*. Upon graduation he engaged in the practice of law, specializing in the law of copyright and the theater.

After an interval of twenty years, he resumed writing and turned to a wholly unforeseen expression. *January Garden* (1926)

is the antithesis of the light verse of Cane's youth; it is sensitive and unequivocally serious. Most of the volume is in a free verse whose contours are shaped by introspection. A somber cast may have accounted for the sparse enthusiasm with which it was received, but it is more difficult to account for failure to recognize the delicacy of the pictorial effects.

Cane's *Behind Dark Spaces* (1930) is less impressionistic, but what it loses in suggestion it gains in sharpness. Mixing "pure" and "suspended" rhyme, his tone-color has grown richer; concentrating on instead of writing around the object, he has developed power without resorting to force.

SNOW TOWARD EVENING

Suddenly the sky turned gray,
The day,
Which had been bitter and chill,
Grew soft and still.
Quietly
From some invisible blossoming tree
Millions of petals cool and white
Drifted and blew,
Lifted and flew,
Fell with the falling night.

TREE IN DECEMBER

Frost has sealed
The still December field.
Over fern and furrow,
Over the quickening
Within each meadowy acre,
Frost, invisibly thorough,
Spreads its thickening
Stiffening lacquer.

Above the field, beneath a sky
Heavy with snow stirring to fly,
A tree stands alone,
Bare of fruit, leaves gone,
Bleak as stone.

Once, on a similar glazed
Field, on a similar tree,
Dead as the eye could see,
The first man, dazed
In the first December, grimly gazed,
Never having seen
The miracle of recurring green,
The shining spectacle of rebirth
Rising out of frozen earth.

Snow fell and all about
Covered earth, and him with doubt.
More chill grew the air
And his mute despair.

Leaves that April had uncurled
Now were blown dust in the world,
Apples mellowing sweet and sound
Now were icy rot in the ground;
Roses August sunned in bloom
Now were less than lost perfume.

Had he seen the final hour
Of fruit and leaf and flower?
Had the last bird taken wing,
Nevermore to sing?
Never to fly in the light of another spring?

The man trembled with cold, with dread,
Thinking of all things dead
And his own earthen bed.

Trembling, he grew aware
Of a new quiet in the air;
Snow had ceased;
A ray came faintly through;
The wavering slit of blue
Vaguely increased.

Trembling, the first man gazed
At the glazed
And glittering tree,
Dead as the eye could see.

Whence came the sight
To read the sign aright?
The hint,—
The glad intimation, flashing:
"Wintry rains
Are blood in the veins;
Under snows and binding sleets
Locked roots live, a heart still beats"?

From what impalpable breath
Issued the faith,
The inner cry: "This is not death"?

FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

Franklin Pierce Adams, better known to the readers of his column as F. P. A., was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 15, 1881. He attended the University of Michigan (1899-1900) and, after a brief career as insurance agent, plunged into journalism. Adams had already been an ardent contributor to B. L. T.'s "A Line o' Type or Two" and, in 1903, he began conducting a column of his own on the Chicago *Journal*. Late in 1904, he came to New York, running his section on *The Evening Mail* until 1914, when he started "The Conning Tower" for the New York *Tribune*, transferring it some years later to the New York *World*.

Adams is the author of several volumes of a light verse that is unusually skillful. *Tobogganing on Parnassus* (1909), *In Other Words* (1912), *By and Large* (1914), *Weights and Measures* (1917), *Something Else Again* (1920), and *So There* (1923), reveal a spirit which is essentially one of mockery. These contain impudent—and faithful—paraphrases of Horace and Propertius, last-line twists *à la* O. Henry (with whom Adams wrote a comic opera that never reached New York), and a healthy satire that runs sharply through the smooth lines.

THE RICH MAN

The rich man has his motor-car,
  His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
  And jeers at Fate.

He frivols through the livelong day,
He knows not Poverty, her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay;
He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
Though I must slave for livelihood—
Think you that I would change with him?
You bet I would!

THOSE TWO BOYS

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.
He worried his parents a lot;
He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;
His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule—
In mischief from autumn to spring;
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew
He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;
He was known as a good little boy;
He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight—
To his mother and father a joy.

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,
That his life would be free of a spot;
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame
And bears a good name;
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell—
You never can tell.

JOHN G. NEIHARDT

John Gneisenau Neihardt was born in Sharpsburg, Illinois, January 8, 1881. He completed a scientific course at Nebraska Normal College in 1897 and lived among the Omaha Indians for

six years (1901-7), studying their customs, characteristics and legends.

Although he had already published two books, *A Bundle of Myrrh* (1908) was his first volume to attract notice. It was full of enthusiastic, insistent virility—a quality which was extended (and overemphasized) in *Man-Song* (1909). Neihardt found a new restraint in *The Stranger at the Gate* (1911), the best of the lyrics from these three volumes appearing in *The Quest* (1916).

Neihardt meanwhile had been going deeper into folk-lore, the results of which appeared in *The Song of Hugh Glass* (1915), *The Song of Three Friends* (1919), *The Song of the Indian Wars* (1926). In 1920 the second of these divided the annual prize offered by the Poetry Society, halving the honors with Gladys Cromwell's *Poems*. These three of Neihardt's are detailed long poems, part of a projected epic series celebrating the winning of the West by the pioneers. What prevents these volumes from fulfilling the breadth at which they aim is the disparity between the author's story and his style. Legend and locution are joined without being united; essentially racy narratives are recited in an archaic, incongruous speech. Yet, in spite of a rhetoric that considers prairies and trappers in terms of "Ilion," "Iseult," "Clotho," the "dim far shore of Styx," Neihardt has achieved his effects with no little skill. Dramatic and dignified, his works are American in conception if not in execution.

WHEN I AM DEAD

When I am dead and nervous hands have thrust
My body downward into careless dust;
I think the grave cannot suffice to hold
My spirit prisoned in the sunless mold!
Some subtle memory of you shall be
A resurrection of the life of me.
Yea, I shall be, because I love you so,
The speechless spirit of all things that grow.
You shall not touch a flower but it shall be
Like a caress upon the cheek of me.
I shall be patient in the common grass
That I may feel your footfall when you pass.
I shall be kind as rain and pure as dew,
A loving spirit 'round the life of you.
When your soft cheeks by perfumed winds are fanned,
'Twill be my kiss—and you will understand.

But when some sultry, storm-bleared sun has set,
I will be lightning if you dare forget!

CRY OF THE PEOPLE

Tremble before thy chattels,
Lords of the scheme of things!
Fighters of all earth's battles,
Ours is the might of kings!
Guided by seers and sages,
The world's heart-beat for a drum,
Snapping the chains of ages,
Out of the night we come!

Lend us no ear that pities!
Offer no almoner's hand!
Alms for the builders of cities!
When will you understand?
Down with your pride of birth
And your golden gods of trade!
A man is worth to his mother, Earth,
All that a man has made!

We are the workers and makers.
We are no longer dumb!
Tremble, O Shirkers and Takers!
Sweeping the earth—we come!
Ranked in the world-wide dawn,
Marching into the day!
The night is gone and the sword is drawn
And the scabbard is thrown away!

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
Go toppling to the dust—a vacant shrine.

Let me go quickly, like a candle light
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.
Give me high noon—and let it then be night!
Thus would I go.

And grant that when I face the grisly Thing,
My song may trumpet down the gray Perhaps.
Let me be as a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody—and snaps!

WITTER BYNNER

Witter Bynner was born in Brooklyn, New York, August 10, 1881. He was graduated from Harvard in 1902 and has been assistant editor of various periodicals as well as adviser to publishers. He spent much of his time lecturing on poetry, traveling in the Orient and studying the American Indian. He lives most of the year in Santa Fé, New Mexico.

Young Harvard (1907), the first of Bynner's volumes, was, as the name implies, a celebration of his *Alma Mater*. *The New World* (1915) is a much riper and far more ambitious effort. In this extended poem, Bynner sought—almost too determinedly—to translate the ideals of democracy into verse. Neither of these volumes displays its author's gifts at their best, for Bynner is, first of all, a lyric poet. *Grenstone Poems* (1917) and *A Canticle of Pan* (1920) reveal a natural singing voice. Bynner harmonizes in many keys; transposing, modulating and shifting from one tonality to another. This very ease is his handicap, for Bynner's facility leads him not only to write too much, but in too many different styles. Many of his poems seem like sounding-boards that echo the tones of every poet except the composer of them. Instead of a fusion of gifts we have, too often, as in *Caravan* (1925), only a confusion.

When Bynner is least dexterous he is most ingratiating. When he does not try to sound the whole gamut of modern poetry from the lyrics of A. E. Housman to the attenuated epigrams of Ezra Pound, he can strike his own note with clarity. Even in *The Beloved Stranger* (1919), where the borrowed accents of his *alter ego* are only too apparent, one is arrested by lines of charm and fluency. Here, as in *Grenstone Poems*, a personality transpires.

Under the pseudonym "Emanuel Morgan" Bynner was co-author with Arthur Davison Ficke (writing under the name of "Anne Knish") of *Spectra* (1916). *Spectra* was a serious burlesque of some of the extreme manifestations of modern poetic tendencies—a remarkable hoax that deceived many of the radical propagandists as well as most of the conservative critics. A volume in collaboration with Kiang Kang-Hu, *The Jade Mountain* (1929), included three hundred poems of the T'ang Dynasty alertly translated.

Bynner's studies in Chinese poetry influenced his transcriptions of the spirit of American Indian rituals. Curiously enough, there is no incongruity. *Indian Earth* (1929) summons the effect rather than the rhythms of the buffalo dance at Santo Domingo, the rain invocation at Cochiti and the Shalako dance-dramas in a technique as delicate as the brush-strokes used to evoke the shifting scene. This is Bynner's deftest and perhaps most valuable work.

GRASS-TOPS

What bird are you in the grass-tops?
Your poise is enough of an answer,
With your wing-tips like up-curving fingers
Of the slow-moving hands of a dancer . . .

And what is so nameless as beauty,
Which poets, who give it a name,
Are only unnaming forever?—
Content, though it go, that it came.

VOICES

O there were lights and laughter
  And the motions to and fro
Of people as they enter
  And people as they go . . .

And there were many voices
  Vying at the feast,
But mostly I remember
  Yours—who spoke the least.

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN[1]

"Lincoln?—
Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington—
We was all green.

[1] See pages 105, 163, 189, 333, 334, 354, 467.

"I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life—
I didn't know how to behave.
I ain't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know,
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own ways.
While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here,'
Praise us up, you know.
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you understand,
It's just—well, I was a farmer—
And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.
I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

TRAIN-MATES

Outside hove Shasta, snowy height on height,
A glory; but a negligible sight,
For you had often seen a mountain-peak
But not my paper. So we came to speak . . .
A smoke, a smile,—a good way to commence
The comfortable exchange of difference!

You a young engineer, five feet eleven,
Forty-five chest, with football in your heaven,
Liking a road-bed newly built and clean,
Your fingers hot to cut away the green
Of brush and flowers that bring beside a track
The kind of beauty steel lines ought to lack,—
And I a poet, wistful of my betters,
Reading George Meredith's high-hearted letters,
Joining betweenwhiles in the mingled speech
Of a drummer, circus-man, and parson, each
Absorbing to himself—as I to me
And you to you—a glad identity!

After a time, when others went away,
A curious kinship made us choose to stay,
Which I could tell you now; but at the time
You thought of baseball teams and I of rhyme,
Until we found that we were college men
And smoked more easily and smiled again;
And I from Cambridge cried, the poet still:
"I know your fine Greek theater on the hill
At Berkeley!" With your happy Grecian head
Upraised, "I never saw the place," you said—
"Once I was free of class, I always went
Out to the field."

Young engineer, you meant
As fair a tribute to the better part
As ever I did. Beauty of the heart
Is evident in temples. But it breathes
Alive where athletes quicken curly wreaths,
Which are the lovelier because they die.
You are a poet quite as much as I,
Though differences appear in what we do,
And I an athlete quite as much as you.
Because you half-surmise my quarter-mile
And I your quatrain, we could greet and smile.
Who knows but we shall look again and find
The circus-man and drummer, not behind
But leading in our visible estate—
As discus-thrower and as laureate?

THE SINGING HUNTSMAN

The huntswoman-moon was my mother,
And the song-man, Apollo, my sire;
And I know either trick like the other,
The trick of the bow and the lyre.

And when beauty darts by me or lingers,
When it opens or folds its wing,
On bow and on lyre are my fingers,
And I shoot, and I sing.

JAMES OPPENHEIM

James Oppenheim was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, May 24, 1882. Two years later his family moved to New York City, where he has lived most of his life. After a public school education, he took special courses at Columbia University (1901-3) and engaged in settlement work, acting in the capacity of assistant head worker of the Hudson Guild Settlement, and superintendent of the Hebrew Technical School for Girls (1904-7). His studies and experiences on the lower East Side of New York furnished material for his first book of short stories, *Doctor Rast* (1909).

Oppenheim's initial venture as a poet, *Monday Morning and Other Poems* (1909), was imitative and experimental. In spite of its obvious indebtedness to Whitman, most of the verses are in formal meters and regular (though ragged) rhyme. Beauty is sought, but seldom captured here; the message is coughed out between bursts of eloquence and fits of stammering.

Songs for the New Age (1914) made Oppenheim his own liberator. The speech, echoing the Whitmanic sonority, develops a music that is strangely Biblical and yet local. It is the expression of an ancient people reacting to modernity, of a race in solution. (See Preface.) This volume, like all of Oppenheim's subsequent work, is analysis in terms of poetry; a slow searching beneath the musical surface attempts to diagnose the tortured soul of man and the twisted times he lives in. The old Isaiah note, with a new introspection, rises out of such poems as "The Slave," "We Dead," "Tasting the Earth"; the music and imagery of the Psalms are heard in "The Flocks," and "The Runner in the Skies."

War and Laughter (1916) holds much of its predecessor's fervor. The Semitic blend of delight and disillusion—that quality which hates the world for its hypocrisies and loves it in spite of

them—is revealed in "Greed," in the ironic "Report on the Planet Earth" and the affirmative "Laughter."

The Book of Self (1917) is an imperfect fusion. Oppenheim's preoccupation with analytical psychology mars the effect of the long passages which contain flashes of clairvoyance. Most of it reads like *Leaves of Grass* translated by Dr. Freud. *The Solitary* (1919) is a stride forward; its major section, a long symbolic poem called "The Sea," breathes the same note that was the burden of the earlier books: "We are flesh on the way to god-hood."

The Mystic Warrior (1921) is an autobiography in free verse. It is a chronicle of inhibition, the effort of an artist to find himself and freedom in a rigid, mechanistic environment. Oppenheim's studies and practice in psychoanalysis are evident in this volume; the chief figure emerges as a weak and groping stumbler towards immensities, a figure lost between self-contempt and over-reaching egotism. *Golden Bird* (1923) is a return to Oppenheim's less personal mysticism. It suffers from loquacity and a curious "yearning back," but some of the poems (such as "Hebrews") rise from a rather cloying catalog of perished beauty.

The Sea, Oppenheim's most comprehensive volume, was published in 1923. It includes the best of all his previous books of poetry with the addition of several "connecting" verses.

Besides his poetry, Oppenheim has published several volumes of short stories, five novels, and two poetic plays. During 1916-17 he was editor of that provoking but short-lived magazine, *The Seven Arts.*

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

THE RUNNER IN THE SKIES

Who is the runner in the skies,
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our Earth and sun hovering like bees about her blossoming heart?
Her feet are on the winds, where space is deep,
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled;
She hurries through the night to a far lover . . .

THE LINCOLN CHILD[1]

Clearing in the forest,
In the wild Kentucky forest,
And the stars, wintry stars strewn above!
O Night that is the starriest
Since Earth began to roll—
For a Soul
Is born out of Love!
Mother love, father love, love of Eternal God—
Stars have pushed aside to let him through—
Through heaven's sun-sown deeps
One sparkling ray of God
Strikes the clod—
(And while an angel-host through wood and clearing sweeps!)
Born in the wild
The Child—
Naked, ruddy, new,
Wakes with the piteous human cry and at the mother-heart sleeps.

To the mother wild berries and honey,
To the father awe without end,
To the child a swaddling of flannel—
And a dawn rolls sharp and sunny
And the skies of winter bend
To see the first sweet word penned
In the godliest human annal.

Frail Mother of the Wilderness,
How strange the world shines in

[1] See pages 105, 163, 189, 333, 334, 349, 467.

And the cabin becomes chapel
And the baby lies secure—
Sweet Mother of the Wilderness,
New worlds for you begin,
You have tasted of the apple
That giveth wisdom sure. . . .

Soon in the wide wilderness,
On a branch blown over a creek,
Up a trail of the wild coon,
In a lair of the wild bee,
The rugged boy, by danger's stress,
Learnt the speech the wild things speak,
Learnt the Earth's eternal tune
Of strife-engendered harmony—
Went to school where Life itself was master,
Went to church where Earth was minister—
And in Danger and Disaster
Felt his future manhood stir!

All about him the land,
Eastern cities, Western prairie,
Wild, immeasurable, grand;
But he was lost where blossomy boughs make airy
Bowers in the forest, and the sand
Makes brook-water a clear mirror that gives back
Green branches and trunks black
And clouds across the heavens lightly fanned.
Yet all the Future dreams, eager to waken,
Within that woodland soul—
And the bough of boy has only to be shaken
That the fruit drop whereby this Earth shall roll
A little nearer God than ever before.
Little recks he of war,
Of national millions waiting on his word—
Dreams still the Event unstirred
In the heart of the boy, the little babe of the wild—
But the years hurry and the tide of the sea
Of Time flows fast and ebbs, and he, even he,
Must leave the wilderness, the wood-haunts wild.
Soon shall the cyclone of Humanity
Tearing through Earth suck up this little child

And whirl him to the top, where he shall be
Riding the storm-column in the lightning-stroke,
Calm at the peak, while down below worlds rage,
And Earth goes out in blood and battle-smoke,
And leaves him with the Sun—an epoch and an age!

And lo, as he grew ugly, gaunt,
And gnarled his way into a man,
What wisdom came to feed his want,
What worlds came near to let him scan!
And as he fathomed through and through
Our dark and sorry human scheme,
He knew what Shakespeare never knew,
What Dante never dared to dream—
That Men are one
Beneath the sun,
And before God are equal souls—
This truth was his,
And this it is
That round him such a glory rolls—
For not alone he knew it as a truth,
He made it of his blood, and of his brain—
He crowned it on the day when piteous Booth
Sent a whole land to weeping with world pain—
When a black cloud blotted the sun
And men stopped in the streets to sob,
To think Old Abe was dead.
Dead, and the day's work still undone,
Dead, and war's ruining heart athrob,
And earth with fields of carnage freshly spread—
Millions died fighting,
But in this man we mourned
Those millions, and one other—
And the States today uniting,
North and South,
East and West,
Speak with a people's mouth
A rhapsody of rest
To him our beloved best,
Our big, gaunt, homely brother—

Our huge Atlantic coast-storm in a shawl,
Our cyclone in a smile—our President,
Who knew and loved us all
With love more eloquent
Than his own words—with Love that in real deeds was spent. . . .

O living God, O Thou who living art,
And real, and near, draw, as at that babe's birth,
Into our souls and sanctify our Earth—
Let down Thy strength that we endure
Mighty and pure
As mothers and fathers of our own Lincoln-child—
Make us more wise, more true, more strong, more mild,
That we may day by day
Rear this wild blossom through its soft petals of clay;
That hour by hour
We may endow it with more human power
Than is our own—
That it may reach the goal
Our Lincoln long has shown!
O Child, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
Soul torn from out our Soul!
May you be great, and pure, and beautiful—
A Soul to search this world
To be a father, brother, comrade, son,
A toiler powerful;
A man whose toil is done
One with God's Law above:
Work wrought through Love!

NIGHT NOTE

A little moon was restless in Eternity
And, shivering beneath the stars,
Dropped in the hiding arms of the western hill.
Night's discord ceased:
The visible universe moved in an endless rhythm:
The wheel of the heavens turned to the pulse of a cricket in the grass.

TASTING THE EARTH

In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

As I lay on my couch in the muffled night, and the rain lashed
my window,
And my forsaken heart would give me no rest, no pause and
no peace,
Though I turned my face far from the wailing of my bereave-
ment. . . .
Then I said: I will eat of this sorrow to its last shred,
I will take it unto me utterly,
I will see if I be not strong enough to contain it. . . .
What do I fear? Discomfort?
How can it hurt me, this bitterness?

The miracle, then!
Turning toward it, and giving up to it,
I found it deeper than my own self. . . .
O dark great mother-globe so close beneath me . . .
It was she with her inexhaustible grief,
Ages of blood-drenched jungles, and the smoking of craters,
and the roar of tempests,
And moan of the forsaken seas,
It was she with the hills beginning to walk in the shapes of the
dark-hearted animals,
It was she risen, dashing away tears and praying to dumb
skies, in the pomp-crumbling tragedy of man . . .
It was she, container of all griefs, and the buried dust of
broken hearts,
Cry of the christs and the lovers and the child-stripped mothers,
And ambition gone down to defeat, and the battle overborne,
And the dreams that have no waking. . . .

My heart became her ancient heart:
On the food of the strong I fed, on dark strange life itself:
Wisdom-giving and somber with the unremitting love of
ages. . . .
There was dank soil in my mouth,
And bitter sea on my lips,
In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

HEBREWS

I come of a mighty race . . . I come of a very mighty race . . .
Adam was a mighty man, and Noah a captain of the moving waters,
Moses was a stern and splendid king, yea, so was Moses . . .
Give me more songs like David's to shake my throat to the pit of the belly,
And let me roll in the Isaiah thunder . . .
Ho! the mightiest of our young men was born under a star in midwinter . . .
His name is written on the sun and it is frosted on the moon . . .
Earth breaths him like an eternal spring; he is a second sky over the Earth.

Mighty race! mighty race!—my flesh, my flesh
Is a cup of song,
Is a well in Asia . . .
I go about with a dark heart where the Ages sit in a divine thunder . . .
My blood is cymbal-clashed and the anklets of the dancers tinkle there . . .
Harp and psaltery, harp and psaltery make drunk my spirit . . .
I am of the terrible people, I am of the strange Hebrews . . .
Amongst the swarms fixed like the rooted stars, my folk is a streaming Comet,
The Wanderer of Eternity, the eternal Wandering Jew . . .

Ho! we have turned against the mightiest of our young men
And in that denial we have taken on the Christ,
And the two thieves beside the Christ,
And the Magdalen at the feet of the Christ,
And the Judas with thirty silver pieces selling the Christ,
And our twenty centuries in Europe have the shape of a Cross
On which we have hung in disaster and glory . . .

Mighty race! mighty race!—my flesh, my flesh
Is a cup of song,
Is a well in Asia.

Hermann Hagedorn was born July 18, 1882, in New York City. He was class poet at Harvard, receiving his B.A. from that University in 1907. He attended Columbia University 1908-09.

Hagedorn began his career as a poet, "A Troop of the Guard" being one of the best class-poems of the generation. Somewhat later, his gift suffered a setback. His *Life of Roosevelt* (1918) attracted attention in political circles, and in 1920 certain factors in the Republican Party persuaded him to undertake a volume glorifying their potential candidate. The result was *That Human Being, Leonard Wood* (1920), a piece of dull hack work which Hagedorn's friends have been eager to forget. Specializing in Rooseveltania, Hagedorn published *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands* (1921) and a selection of speeches and writings under the title *The Americanism of Theodore Roosevelt* (1923).

Poems and Ballads (1913) seldom rises above prettiness and technical fluency. A few of the ballads have dramatic power as well as dexterity; "Wings" has a free gesture in its rapid pace, and "Doors" is a sonnet in the tradition which no anthologist of the period can afford to miss.

DOORS

Like a young child who to his mother's door
  Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
  And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
  A door that will not open, sick and numb,
  I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
  By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
    Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing, hark!
  Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
    The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr., was born in Boonville, on the edge of the Adirondacks, New York, November 6, 1882, received his A.B. in 1904 from Cornell, and spent most of his life in the state of his birth. He is the author of ten volumes of lyrics and lyrical sonnets, his first volume *The Path o' Dreams* being published in 1904. Three representative collections are *The Voice in the Silence* (1911), *The Rose Jar* (1914), and *Sonnets of the Saints* (1925). *Sonnets of the Cross* was reprinted several times since its first edition in 1922. Although he has written many more ambitious verses, none has been so popular as the eight lines here reprinted. Jones died in New York City in 1932.

SOMETIMES

Across the fields of yesterday
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad just back from play—
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully
Once he has crept within,
I wonder if he hopes to see
The man I might have been.

ALICE CORBIN

Alice Corbin (Mrs. William Penhallow Henderson) was born in St. Louis, Missouri. She has been Associate Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* since 1912, co-editing (with Harriet Monroe) *The New Poetry, An Anthology* (1917, Revised Edition 1923). Since 1916 she has lived in Santa Fé, New Mexico.

The Spinning Woman of the Sky (1912) contains few hints of originality. It is cast in an entirely different key than Miss Corbin's subsequent efforts. Her later verses are much richer; they reveal a close contact with primitive people and native folklore. Her southern and far western sketches are particularly colorful; a volume of New Mexico studies, *Red Earth* (1920), being full of sympathetic records. Even in the paraphrases of folktunes, she maintains her own low-pitched voice whether the accent is one of dialect or the singer's natural tone.

ECHOES OF CHILDHOOD

(A Folk-Medley)

Uncle Jim

Old Uncle Jim was as blind as a mole,
But he could fiddle Virginia Reels,
Till you felt the sap run out of your heels,
Till you knew the devil had got your soul—

Down the middle and swing yo' partners,
Up agin and salute her low,
Shake yo' foot an' keep a-goin',
Down the middle an' do-se-do!

Mind yo' manners an' doan git keerless,
Swing yo' lady and bow full low,
S'lute yo' partner an' turn yo' neighbor,
Gran'-right-an'-left, and aroun' you go!

Delphy

Delphy's breast was wide and deep,
A shelf to lay a child asleep,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
Rocking like a lifted boat
On lazy tropic seas afloat,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

Delphy, when my mother died,
Taught me wisdom, curbed my pride,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
And when she laid her body down,
It shone, a jewel, in His crown,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

. . . . . .

(Underneath the southern moon
I was cradled to the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

MANDY'S RELIGION

I'se got religion an' I doan care
Who knows that God an' I are square,
I wuz carryin' home my mistis' wash
When God came an' spoke to me out'n de hush.

An' I th'ew de wash up inter de air,
An' I climbed a tree to de golden stair;
Ef it hadn't a been fur Mistah Wright
I'd had ter stayed dere all de night!

. . . . . .

(Underneath the southern moon
I was cradled to the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

BETSY'S BOY

Betsy's boy could shuffle and clog,
Though you couldn't get him to saw a log.
Laziest boy about the place
Till he started to dance—and you saw his face!
It was all lit up like a mask of bronze
Set in a niche between temple gongs—
For he would dance and never stop
Till he fell on the floor like a spun-out top.
His feet hung loose from his supple waist,
He danced without stopping, he danced without haste.
Like Shiva the Hindu his feet were bound
In the rhythm of stars and of streams underground:

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
Can't help dancin' though de preacher says
Can't git to heaven doin' no sich ways,
Can't help dancin' though de devil stan's
With a pitch-fork waitin' in his brimstone han's;

Got—ter—keep—dancin',—can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—I—doan—know—
how . . .

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
People's faces lookin' scared an' white,
Hands a-clappin' an' eyes starin' bright.
Can't help dancin' though de candle's dyin',
Can't help dancin' while de fiddle's cryin';
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—I—doan—know—
how!

THE OLD NEGRO ALONE

Who dat droppin' froo de crumblin' roof?—
Mah soul am ole, I done sinned mah sin;
I'se waitin' fo' de Lawd to let me in:
Doan you dare show no debbil's hoof
Drappin' on down froo de hole in de roof!

Who dat croakin' on de winder-sill?—
I'll tek dis poker in mah han'
An' mek you join de joyless ban'
Ob dem dat's crossed de holy will
Ef yo' doan stop croakin' on de winder-sill!

O Lawd, hab mussy! Mah soul am ole,
I'se heahed de cock crowin' an' de bayin' houn';
Hit's still an' dark in de undergroun',
I doan wan' ter lie in de rain an' de cole:
Lawd, hab mussy, an' save mah soul!

LOVE ME AT LAST

Love me at last, or if you will not,
Leave me;
Hard words could never, as these half-words,
Grieve me:
Love me at last—or leave me.

Love me at last, or let the last word uttered
Be but your own;
Love me or leave me—as a cloud, a vapor,
Or a bird flown.
Love me at last—I am but sliding water
Over a stone.

LOLA RIDGE

Lola Ridge was born in Dublin, Ireland, leaving there in infancy and spending her childhood in Sydney, Australia. After living some years in New Zealand, she returned to Australia to study art. In 1907, she came to the United States, supporting herself for three years by writing fiction for popular magazines. She stopped this work only, as she says, "because I found I would have to do so if I wished to survive as an artist." For several years she earned her living in a variety of ways—as organizer for an educational movement, as advertisement writer, as illustrator, artist's model, factory-worker. In 1918, *The New Republic* published her long poem, *The Ghetto*, and Miss Ridge, until then totally unknown, became the "discovery" of the year.

Her volume, *The Ghetto and Other Poems* (1918), contains one poem that is brilliant, several that are powerful and none that is mediocre. The title-poem is its pinnacle; in it Miss Ridge touches depths which are also heights. It is a poem of the city, of its sodden brutalities, its sudden beauties. Swift figures shine from these lines, like barbaric colors leaping out of darkness; images are surprising but never strained; confusion is given clarity. In her other poems—especially in "The Song of Iron," "Faces" and the poignant portrait "Marie"—the same dignity is maintained, though with somewhat less magic.

Sun-Up (1920) and *Red Flag* (1924) are less integrated, more frankly experimental. But the same vibrancy and restrained power that distinguished her first book are manifest here. Her delineations are sensitive, her phrases vivid yet natural. In spite of an overuse of similes, she accomplishes the maximum in effect with a minimum of effort.

Firehead (1929) is a moving narrative poem, the time and scene of which are the day of the Crucifixion. By making John, Peter and the two Marys interpret the significance of the event Miss Ridge has written a poem of psychological depth and urgent penetration. If anything, the effort is too grandiose; the reader loses sight of the central figure in a bright cloud of metaphors. Phrases rise, not from the core of the tragedy, but from the prod-

ded literary mind; the Passion is lost in a panorama. And yet there is a finality in *Firehead* beyond the finality of phrase. Passages move in and out of the large design which take possession of the imagination, passages that are music visualized and "time made audible."

PASSAGES FROM "THE GHETTO"

Old Sodos no longer makes saddles.
He has forgotten how . . .
Time spins like a crazy dial in his brain,
And night by night
I see the love-gesture of his arm
In its green-greasy coat-sleeve
Circling the Book,
And the candles gleaming starkly
On the blotched-paper whiteness of his face,
Like a miswritten psalm . . .
Night by night
I hear his lifted praise,
Like a broken whinnying
Before the Lord's shut gate.

. . . . .

Lights go out
And the stark trunks of the factories
Melt into the drawn darkness,
Sheathing like a seamless garment.

And mothers take home their babies,
Waxen and delicately curled,
Like little potted flowers closed under the stars. . . .

Lights go out . . .
And colors rush together,
Fusing and floating away.
Pale worn gold like the settings of old jewels . . .
Mauve, exquisite, tremulous, and luminous purples,
And burning spires in aureoles of light
Like shimmering auras.
They are covering up the pushcarts . . .
Now all have gone save an old man with mirrors—

Little oval mirrors like tiny pools.
He shuffles up a darkened street
And the moon burnishes his mirrors till they shine like phosphorus. . . .
The moon like a skull,
Staring out of eyeless sockets at the old men trundling home the pushcarts.

. . . . . .

A sallow dawn is in the sky
As I enter my little green room.
Without, the frail moon,
Worn to a silvery tissue,
Throws a faint glamor on the roofs,
And down the shadowy spires
Lights tip-toe out . . .
Softly as when lovers close street doors.

Out of the Battery
A little wind
Stirs idly—as an arm
Trails over a boat's side in dalliance—
Rippling the smooth dead surface of the heat,
And Hester street,
Like a forlorn woman over-borne
By many babies at her teats,
Turns on her trampled bed to meet the day.

FACES

A late snow beats
With cold white fists upon the tenements—
Hurriedly drawing blinds and shutters,
Like tall old slatterns
Pulling aprons about their heads.

Lights slanting out of Mott Street
Gibber out,
Or dribble through bar-room slits,
Anonymous shapes
Conniving behind shuttered panes

Caper and disappear . . .
Where the Bowery
Is throbbing like a fistula
Back of her ice-scabbed fronts.

Livid faces
Glimmer in furtive doorways,
Or spill out of the black pockets of alleys,
Smears of faces like muddied beads,
Making a ghastly rosary
The night mumbles over
And the snow with its devilish and silken whisper . . .
Patrolling arcs
Blowing shrill blasts over the Bread Line
Stalk them as they pass,
Silent as though accouched of the darkness,
And the wind noses among them,
    Like a skunk
That roots about the heart . . .

Colder:
And the Elevated slams upon the silence
Like a ponderous door.
Then all is still again,
Save for the wind fumbling over
The emptily swaying faces—
The wind rummaging
Like an old Jew . . .

Faces in glimmering rows . . .
(No sign of the abject life—
Not even a blasphemy . . .)
But the spindle legs keep time
To a limping rhythm,
And the shadows twitch upon the snow
    Convulsively—
As though death played
With some ungainly dolls.

NEW ORLEANS

Do you remember
Honey-melon moon
Dripping thick sweet light
Where Canal Street saunters off by herself among quiet trees?
And the faint decayed patchouli—
Fragrance of New Orleans . . .
New Orleans,
Like a dead tube rose
Upheld in the warm air . . .
Miraculously whole.

WIND IN THE ALLEYS

Wind, rising in the alleys,
My spirit lifts in you like a banner
  streaming free of hot walls.
You are full of unshaped dreams . . .
You are laden with beginnings . . .
There is hope in you . . . not sweet . . .
  acrid as blood in the mouth.
Come into my tossing dust
Scattering the peace of old deaths,
Wind rising out of the alleys
Carrying stuff of flame.

MARIE

Marie's face is a weathered sign
To the palace of gliding cars
Over the bend where the trolley dips:
A dime for a wired rose,
Nickel-a-ride to the zig-zag stars,
And then men in elegant clothes,
That feed you on cardboard ships,
And the sea-floats so fine!—
Like a green and gorgeous bubble
God blew out of his lips.

When Marie carries down the stair
The ritual of her face,

Your greeting takes her unaware,
And her glance is timid-bold
As a dog's unsure of its place.
With that hair, of the rubbed-off gold
Of a wedding-ring worn to a thread,
In a halo about the head,
And those luminous eyes in their rims of paint,
She looks a bedizened saint.

But when the worn moon, like a face still beautiful,
Wavers above the Battery,
And light comes in, mauve-gray,
Squeezing through shutters of furnished rooms
Till only corners hold spots of darkness—
As a tablecloth its purple stains
When a festival is ended—
Then Marie creeps into the house.

The paint is lonesome on her cheek.
The paint is gone from off her mouth
That curls back loosely from her teeth.
She pushes slackly at the dawn
That crawls upon the yellow blind,
And enters like an aimless moth
Whose dim wings hover and alight
Upon the blurred face of the clock,
Or on the pallor of her feet—
Or anything that's white.
Until dispersed upon the sheet,
All limp, her waxen body lies
In its delinquent grace,
Like a warm bent candle
That flares about its place.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

Arthur Davison Ficke was born at Davenport, Iowa, November 10, 1883. He received his A.B. at Harvard (1904), studied for the law and was admitted to the bar in 1908. In 1919, after two years' service in France, he gave up his law practice and devoted himself to literature exclusively.

Ficke is the author of eleven volumes of verse, the most representative of which are *Sonnets of a Portrait Painter* (1914), *The Man on the Hilltop* (1915) and *An April Elegy* (1917). In these the author succeeded in combining clarity of vision with an intensified seriousness, especially in the sonnets and shorter poems.

Having been an expert collector and student of Japanese prints, Ficke has written two books on this theme. His intellectual equipment is reënforced by a gift of satire. Writing under the pseudonym "Anne Knish," he was one of the co-authors (with Witter Bynner) of *Spectra* (1916), which, caricaturing some of the wilder outgrowths of the new poetry, was taken seriously by a majority of the critics and proved to be a brilliant hoax.

Out of Silence and Other Poems (1924) and *Mountain Against Mountain* (1929) are records of a romanticist's effort to escape a world he half understands and wholly fears. The poet—at least so his poems assure us—is "homesick in modernity." Even the earth's beauty hurts; loveliness does not fulfill him, he is frustrated by it. Nevertheless, the foretold failure of his "secret, impossible hopes" does not prevent him from wringing an occasional if too protracted poignance from his defeat.

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

She limps with halting painful pace,
  Stops, wavers and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face,
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand, like bundled cornstalks, holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
  A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
  Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
  She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
  From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
Abandoned to the final night.

THE THREE SISTERS

Gone are the three, those sisters rare
With wonder-lips and eyes ashine.
One was wise and one was fair,
And one was mine.

Ye mourners, weave for the sleeping hair
Of only two your ivy vine.
For one was wise and one was fair,
But one was mine.

SONNET

There are strange shadows fostered of the moon,
More numerous than the clear-cut shade of day. . . .
Go forth, when all the leaves whisper of June,
Into the dusk of swooping bats at play;
Or go into that late November dusk
When hills take on the noble lines of death,
And on the air the faint, astringent musk
Of rotting leaves pours vaguely troubling breath.
Then shall you see shadows whereof the sun,
Knows nothing—aye, a thousand shadows there
Shall leap and flicker and stir and stay and run,
Like petrels of the changing foul or fair;
Like ghosts of twilight, of the moon, of him
Whose homeland lies past each horizon's rim.

LEAF-MOVEMENT

From its thin branch high in the autumn wind
The yellow leaf now sails in upward flight;
Hovers at top-slope; then, a whirling bright
Eddy of motion, sinks. The storm behind

With gusts and veering tyrannies would uphold
Even as it downward beats this gorgeous thing
Which like an angel's lost and shattered wing
Against the gray sky sweeps its broken gold.
Another eddy, desperate or in mirth,
Brings it to rest here on the crackled earth
Where men can see it better than on the bough.
What quite preposterous irony of wind's will
Touches it where it lies, golden and still,
And once more lifts it vainly heavenward now!

BADGER CLARK

Badger Clark was born at Albia, Iowa, in 1883. He moved to Dakota Territory at the age of three months and now lives in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Clark is one of the few men who have lived to see their work become part of folk-lore, many of his songs having been adapted and paraphrased by the cowboys who have made them their own. A version of one of his poems ("The Glory Trail"), after wide circulation among the ranchers and cowpunchers, was printed as an example of anonymous folk-song in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* under the title "High-Chin Bob"—and credited to "Author Unknown." Lomax's collection of cowboy songs also contains this interesting "anonymous" variant which is reprinted below.

Sun and Saddle Leather (1915) and *Grass-Grown Trails* (1917) are the expression of a native singer; happy, spontaneous and seldom "literary." There is wind in these songs; the smell of camp-smoke and the colors of prairie sunsets rise from them. Free, for the most part, from affectations, Clark is easy in his use of ranch and prairie vernacular.

THE GLORY TRAIL

'Way high up the Mogollons,[1]
  Among the mountain tops,
A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
  And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
  A-trippin' down a slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
  And mav'rick-hungry rope.

[1] Pronounced Mokićnes, with the accent on the last syllable.

"Oh, glory be to me," says he,
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away;
I ride my good top-hawse today
And I'm top-rope of the Lazy J—
Hi! kitty cat, you're ours!"

That lion licked his paw so brown
And dreamed soft dreams of veal—
And then the circlin' loop sung down
And roped him 'round his meal.
He yowled quick fury to the world
Till all the hills yelled back;
The top-hawse gave a snort and whirled
And Bob caught up the slack.

"Oh, glory be to me," laughs he.
"We've hit the glory trail.
No human man as I have read
Darst loop a ragin' lion's head,
Nor ever hawse could drag one dead
Until we told the tale."

'Way high up the Mogollons
That top-hawse done his best,
Through whippin' brush and rattlin' stones,
From canyon-floor to crest.
But ever when Bob turned and hoped
A limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly-roped
But healthy, loped behind.

"Oh, glory be to me," grunts he.
"This glory trail is rough,
Yet even till the Judgment Morn
I'll keep this dally 'round the horn
For never any hero born
Could stoop to holler: 'Nuff!'"

Three suns had rode their circle home
Beyond the desert's rim,
And turned their star-herds loose to roam
The ranges high and dim;

Yet up and down and 'round and 'cross
Bob pounded, weak and wan,
For pride still glued him to his hawse
And glory drove him on.

"Oh, glory be to me," sighs he.
"He kaint be drug to death,
But now I know beyond a doubt
Them heroes I have read about
Was only fools that stuck it out
To end of mortal breath."

'Way high up the Mogollons
A prospect man did swear
That moon dreams melted down his bones
And hoisted up his hair:
A ribby cow-hawse thundered by,
A lion trailed along,
A rider, ga'nt but chin on high,
Yelled out a crazy song:

"Oh, glory be to me!" cries he,
"And to my noble noose!
Oh, stranger, tell my pards below
I took a rampin' dream in tow,
And if I never lay him low,
I'll never turn him loose!"

THE COYOTE

Trailing the last gleam after,
In the valleys emptied of light,
Ripples a whimsical laughter
Under the wings of the night,
Mocking the faded west airily,
Meeting the little bats merrily,
Over the mesas it shrills
To the red moon on the hills.

Mournfully rising and waning,
Far through the moon-silvered land
Wails a weird voice of complaining
Over the thorns and the sand.

Out of blue silences eerily,
On to the black mountains wearily,
Till the dim desert is crossed,
Wanders the cry, and is lost.

Here by the fire's ruddy streamers,
Tired with our hopes and our fears,
We inarticulate dreamers
Hark to the song of our years.
Up to the brooding divinity
Far in that sparkling infinity
Cry our despair and delight,
Voice of the Western night!

HARRY KEMP

Harry (Hibbard) Kemp, known as "the tramp-poet," was born in Youngstown, Ohio, December 15, 1883. He came East at the age of twelve, left school to enter a factory, but returned to high school to study English.

A globe-trotter by nature, he went to sea before finishing his high school course. He shipped first to Australia, then to China, from China to California, from California to the University of Kansas. After a few months in London in 1909 (he crossed the Atlantic as a stowaway) he returned to New York City, where he has lived ever since, founding his own theater in which he is actor, stage-manager, playwright and chorus.

Kemp's first book was a play, *Judas* (1910), a reversion of the Biblical figure along the lines of Paul Heyse's *Mary of Magdala.* His first collection of poems, *The Cry of Youth* (1914), like the subsequent volume, *The Passing God* (1919), is full of every kind of poetry except the kind one might imagine Kemp would write. Instead of crude and boisterous verse, here is a precise and over-polished poetry. Kemp has, strangely enough, taken the classic formalists for his models—one can detect timid whispers of Pope and Dryden among his lines.

Chanteys and Ballads (1920) is riper. The notes are more varied, the sense of personality is more pronounced. *Tramping on Life* (1922) is an autobiographical narrative, especially ingratiating in its presentation of Kemp's childhood. *The Love Rogue* (1923) is an adaptation from the Spanish of Tirso de Molina, a drama that Kemp insists is "the original Don Juan play." *Don Juan's Note-Book,* privately printed in 1929, is a se-

quence of rhymed, cynical and generally dull epigrams. His less assertive, traditional verse remains his best.

STREET LAMPS

Softly they take their being, one by one,
From the lamp-lighter's hand, after the sun
Has dropped to dusk . . . like little flowers they bloom
Set in long rows amid the growing gloom.

Who he who lights them is, I do not know,
Except that, every eve, with footfall slow
And regular, he passes by my room
And sets his gusty flowers of light a-bloom.

A PHANTASY OF HEAVEN

Perhaps he plays with cherubs now,
  Those little, golden boys of God,
Bending, with them, some silver bough,
  The while a seraph, head a-nod,

Slumbers on guard; how they will run
  And shout, if he should wake too soon,—
As fruit more golden than the sun
  And riper than the full-grown moon,

Conglobed in clusters, weighs them down,
  Like Atlas heaped with starry signs;
And, if they're tripped, heel over crown,
  By hidden coils of mighty vines,—

Perhaps the seraph, swift to pounce,
  Will hale them, vexed, to God—and He
Will only laugh, remembering, once
  He was a boy in Galilee!

CAPE'S END

There is battle here, there is clean and vigorous war,
There are bivouacs visited by night's every star,

There are long, barren slopes of encampment burned clean by
the sun,
And ramparts of strange new dreams to be stormed and won.
Here the five-petaled wild rose blossoms more sweet
Because the earth is barren and the heat
Intolerable for lush, domestic grass;
The ocean shines like many disks of brass,
Or between white hollows it lapses, great and green
Where solitude sifts slowly in between
The hills of sparkling waste and rise and fall—
Hills whose one music is the sea bird's call! . . .
And here is all space that ever eye can see:
The ocean completing all immensity,
And the sky, mother of infinity—
Yet greatness on smallness jostles till both are one
And a grain of sand stands doorkeeper to the sun.

MAX EASTMAN

Max Eastman was born in Canandaigua, New York, January 4, 1883. Both his father and mother had been Congregationalist preachers, so it was natural that the son should turn from scholasticism to a social expression. Eastman received his A.B. at Williams in 1905; from 1907 to 1911 he was Associate Professor in Philosophy at Columbia University. But after the latter part of 1911, he devoted all his time to writing, expressing the problems of economic inequality in a style that was all the firmer for being philosophic. In 1913, he became editor of *The Masses* which, in 1917, changed its name to *The Liberator*.

Child of the Amazons (1913) reveals the lover of quiet beauty as well as the hater of injustice. The best of these poems, with many new ones, were incorporated in *Colors of Life* (1918).

Besides Eastman's poems and essays, he has written one of the most clarifying—and most readable—studies of the period. *Enjoyment of Poetry* (1913) is invaluable as a new kind of textbook; eliminating the usual academic and literary classifications, Eastman accomplishes his object, which is to show that the poetic in everyday perception should not be separated from the poetic in literature. *The Sense of Humor*, a companion volume of analysis, appeared in 1921.

AT THE AQUARIUM

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As, through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion.
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro,
They watch with never-winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

WALLACE STEVENS

Wallace Stevens, born in Pennsylvania, educated there and at Harvard, devoting himself to legal work in Hartford, Connecticut, is a poet of peculiar reticences. His attitude to his work is, in itself, significant. Although most of it appeared in the two best known poetry magazines of the period, *Others* and *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, as early as 1913, it was not until ten years later that Stevens' first book, *Harmonium* (1923), appeared.

The most casual reading of this volume discloses the fact that Stevens is a stylist of unusual delicacy. Even the least sympathetic reader must be struck by the poet's hypersensitive and ingenious imagination. It is a curiously ambiguous world which Stevens paints: a world of merging half-lights, of finicking shadows, of disembodied emotions. Even this last word is an exaggeration, for emotion itself seems absent from the brightly colored segments of the poet's designs. As Llewellyn Powys has written, "Mr. Stevens' poetry is beyond good and evil, beyond hope and despair, beyond thought of any kind, one might almost say."

Considered as a painter, Stevens is one of the most original impressionists of the times. He is fond of little blocks of color, verbal mosaics in which syllables are used as pigments. Little related to any human struggle, the content of *Harmonium* progresses toward a sort of "absolute" poetry which, depending on tone rather than on passion, aims to flower in an air of pure estheticism. His very titles—which deliberately add to the reader's

confusion by having little or no connection with most of the poems —betray this quality: "Hymn from a Watermelon Pavilion," "The Emperor of Ice Cream," "The Paltry Nude Starts on a Spring Voyage," "Frogs Eat Butterflies, Snakes Eat Frogs, Hogs Eat Snakes, Men Eat Hogs." Such poems have much for the eye, something for the ear, but little indeed for that central hunger which is at the core of all the senses.

Although Stevens displays an almost childish love of alliteration and assonance, he strikes out many vivid phrases. It is true that what Stevens spreads before us is often less like a canvas and more like a palette. But his exotically splashed lines are alert with witty precisions and his gamut, though limited, is quite his own.

"Sunday Morning" and "Sea Surface Full of Clouds" are a curious blend of disintegrated fantasy and "fictive" or fictitious reality. Superficially obscure, these poems are highly selective in choice of allusions, inner harmonies and special luxuriance of sound; they foliate in a mid-region where the esthetic instinct encroaches on the reasoning intellect. "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" and "Domination of Black" have a delicacy of design which suggests the Chinese; "Peter Quince at the Clavier" and the exquisite "To the One of Fictive Music" (Stevens' most obviously musical moment) reveals an elegance which places "this auditor of insects, this lutanist of fleas" as one who has perfected a kind of poetry which is, for all its limitations, a strangely fastidious and hermetic art.

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER[1]

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 308.

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay,
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
So maidens die, to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now, in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

TO THE ONE OF FICTIVE MUSIC

Sister and mother and diviner love,
And of the sisterhood of the living dead
Most near, most clear, and of the clearest bloom,
And of the fragrant mothers the most dear
And queen, and of diviner love the day

And flame and summer and sweet fire, no thread
Of cloudy silver sprinkles in your gown
Its venom of renown, and on your head
No crown is simpler than the simple hair.

Now, of the music summoned by the birth
That separates us from the wind and sea,
Yet leaves us in them, until earth becomes,
By being so much of the things we are,
Gross effigy and simulacrum, none
Gives motion to perfection more serene
Than yours, out of our imperfections wrought,
Most rare, or ever of more kindred air
In the laborious weaving that you wear.

For so retentive of themselves are men
That music is intensest which proclaims
The near, the clear, and vaunts the clearest bloom,
And of all vigils musing the obscure,
That apprehends the most which sees and names,
As in your name, an image that is sure,
Among the arrant spices of the sun,
O bough and bush and scented vine, in whom
We give ourselves our likest issuance.

Yet not too like, yet not so like to be
Too near, too clear, saving a little to endow
Our feigning with the strange unlike, whence springs
The difference that heavenly pity brings.
For this, musician, in your girdle fixed
Bear other perfumes. On your pale head wear
A band entwining, set with fatal stones.
Unreal, give back to us what once you gave:
The imagination that we spurned and crave.

SUNDAY MORNING

I

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug, mingle to dissipate

The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.
She dreams a little, and she feels the dark
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,
As a calm darkens among water-lights.
The pungent oranges and bright green wings
Seem things in some procession of the dead,
Winding across wide water, without sound.
The day is like wide water, without sound,
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet
Over the seas, to silent Palestine,
Dominion of the blood and sepulcher.

II

She hears, upon that water without sound,
A voice that cries: "The tomb in Palestine
Is not the porch of spirits lingering;
It is the grave of Jesus, where He lay."
We live in an old chaos of the sun,
Or old dependency of day and night,
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
Of that wide water, inescapable.
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
Whistle about us their spontaneous cries:
Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
And in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
Downward to darkness, on extended wings.

III

She says: "I am content when wakened birds,
Before they fly, test the reality
Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields
Return no more, where, then, is paradise?"
There is not any haunt of prophecy,
Nor any old chimera of the grave,
Neither the golden underground, nor isle
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,
Nor visionary South, nor cloudy palm

Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured
As April's green endures; or will endure
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped
By consummation of the swallow's wings.

IV

She says, "But in contentment I still feel
The need of some imperishable bliss."
Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
Alone, shall come fulfillment to our dreams
And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
Of sure obliteration on our paths—
The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
Whispered a little out of tenderness—
She makes the willow shiver in the sun
For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
She causes boys to bring sweet-smelling pears
And plums in ponderous piles. The maidens taste
And stray impassioned in the littering leaves.

V

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men
Shall chant in orgy on a summer morn
Their boisterous devotion to the sun—
Not as a god, but as a god might be,
Naked among them, like a savage source.
Their chant shall be a chant of paradise,
Out of their blood, returning to the sky;
And in their chant shall enter, voice by voice,
The windy lake wherein their lord delights,
The trees, like seraphim, and echoing hills,
That choir among themselves long afterward.
They shall know well the heavenly fellowship
Of men that perish and of summer morn—
And whence they came and whither they shall go,
The dew upon their feet shall manifest.

DOMINATION OF BLACK

At night, by the fire,
The colors of the bushes
And of the fallen leaves,
Repeating themselves,
Turned in the room,
Like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind.
Yes: but the color of the heavy hemlocks
Came striding.
And I remembered the cry of the peacocks.

The colors of their tails
Were like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind,
In the twilight wind.
They swept over the room,
Just as they flew from the boughs of the hemlocks
Down to the ground.
I heard them cry—the peacocks.
Was it a cry against the twilight
Or against the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind,
Turning as the flames
Turned in the fire,
Turning as the tails of the peacocks
Turned in the loud fire,
Loud as the hemlocks
Full of the cry of the peacocks?
Or was it a cry against the hemlocks?

Out of the window,
I saw how the planets gathered
Like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind.
I saw how the night came,
Came striding like the color of the heavy hemlocks.
I felt afraid.
And I remembered the cry of the peacocks.

SEA SURFACE FULL OF CLOUDS

I

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night
And in the morning summer hued the deck

And made one think of rosy chocolate
And gilt umbrellas. Paradisal green
Gave suavity to the perplexed machine

Of ocean, which like limpid water lay.
Who, then, in that ambrosial latitude
Out of the light evolved the moving blooms,

Who, then, evolved the sea-blooms from the clouds
Diffusing balm in that Pacific calm?
C'était mon enfant, mon bijou, mon âme.

The sea-clouds whitened far below the calm
And moved, as blooms move, in the swimming green
And in its watery radiance, while the hue

Of heaven in an antique reflection rolled
Round those flotillas. And sometimes the sea
Poured brilliant iris on the glistening blue.

II

In that November off Tehuantepec
The slopping of the sea grew still one night.
At breakfast jelly yellow streaked the deck

And made one think of chop-house chocolate
And sham umbrellas. And a sham-like green
Capped summer-seeming on the tense machine

Of ocean, which in sinister flatness lay.
Who, then, beheld the rising of the clouds
That strode submerged in that malevolent sheen,

Who saw the mortal massives of the blooms
Of water moving on the water-floor?
C'était mon frère du ciel, ma vie, mon or.

The gongs rang loudly as the windy blooms
Hoo-hooed it in the darkened ocean-blooms.
The gongs grew still. And then blue heaven spread

Its crystalline pendentives on the sea
And the macabre of the water-glooms
In an enormous undulation fled.

III

In that November off Tehuantepec,
The slopping of the sea grew still one night,
And a pale silver patterned on the deck

Made one think of porcelain chocolate
And pied umbrellas. An uncertain green,
Piano-polished, held the tranced machine

Of ocean, as a prelude holds and holds.
Who, seeing silver petals of white blooms
Unfolding in the water, feeling sure

Of the milk within the saltiest spurge, heard, then,
The sea unfolding in the sunken clouds?
Oh! C'était mon extase et mon amour.

So deeply sunken were they that the shrouds,
The shrouding shadows, made the petals black
Until the rolling heaven made them blue,

A blue beyond the rainy hyacinth,
And smiting the crevasses of the leaves
Deluged the ocean with a sapphire hue.

IV

In that November off Tehuantepec
The night-long slopping of the sea grew still.
A mallow morning dozed upon the deck

And made one think of musky chocolate
And frail umbrellas. A too-fluent green
Suggested malice in the dry machine

Of ocean, pondering dank stratagem.
Who then beheld the figures of the clouds,
Like blooms secluded in the thick marine?

Like blooms? Like damasks that were shaken off
From the loosed girdles in the spangling must.
C'était ma foi, la nonchalance divine.

The nakedness would rise and suddenly turn
Salt masks of beard and mouths of bellowing,
Would— But more suddenly the heaven rolled

Its bluest sea-clouds in the thinking green
And the nakedness became the broadest blooms,
Mile-mallows that a mallow sun cajoled.

V

In that November off Tehuantepec
Night stilled the slopping of the sea. The day
Came, bowing and voluble, upon the deck,

Good clown. . . . One thought of Chinese chocolate
And large umbrellas. And a motley green
Followed the drift of the obese machine

Of ocean, perfected in indolence.
What pistache one, ingenious and droll,
Beheld the sovereign clouds as jugglery

And the sea as turquoise-turbaned Sambo, neat
At tossing saucers—cloudy-conjuring sea?
C'était mon esprit batard, l'ignominie.

The sovereign clouds came clustering. The conch
Of loyal conjuration trumped. The wind
Of green blooms turning crisped the motley hue

To clearing opalescence. Then the sea
And heaven rolled as one and from the two
Came fresh transfigurings of freshest blue.

ANNUAL GAIETY

In the morning in the blue snow
The catholic sun, its majesty,
Pinks and pinks the ice-hard melanchole.

Wherefore those prayers to the moon?
Or is it that alligators lie
Along the edges of your eye
Basking in desert Florida?

Père Guzz, in heaven, thumb your lyre
And chant the January fire
And joy of snow and snow.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

William Carlos Williams was born in Rutherford, New Jersey, September 17, 1883, the son of Raquel Ellen Rose Hoheb, born at Mayaguez, Porto Rico, and William George Williams, born in Birmingham, England. Williams was educated at Horace Mann High School, New York, at Geneva, Switzerland, and graduated in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in 1906. After studying abroad, he returned in 1910 and took up his practice in Rutherford, where he has lived ever since.

As Williams is of mixed Dutch, Jewish and Basque extraction, some of his friends have affected to find these mingled strains in his curiously exotic work. Be this as it may, Williams is one of the most interesting of the left wing of poetic expressionists. *The Tempers*, following an immature *Poems* (1909), was published in London in 1913, a tiny four-inch book which reveals nothing more unusual than youthful uncertainty. *Al Que Quiere* (1917) strikes a more decisive experimental note. From the mocking directions for a funeral which Williams has entitled "Tract" to the more extended "History," Williams achieves a purposely distorted intensification of figure. In *Kora in Hell* (1921) and *Sour Grapes* (1922) Williams seems to be wavering between sharp experiment and the mere exhibition of eccentricities. On one page he paints the scrupulous arrangement of "Queen-Anne's-Lace"; on the next he offers, with cheerful indiscrimination, the flat absurdity of "Complete Destruction."

Although it is difficult to accept Williams in his uncritical entirety, it is ridiculous to reject him, as so many have done, in toto.

Even his wildest records, even the uncontrolled stammerings of the unconscious in *Spring and All* (1923), have an esthetic purpose. Those who have been quick to accuse Williams of charlatanry are those who have never ventured any farther than his disorganized moments and have not glimpsed the strong color and delicate movement of such poems as "Peace on Earth," "Metric Figure" and "Dawn."

Two prose works, *In the American Grain* (1925) and *A Voyage to Pagany* (1928), carry over Williams' stylized distinctiveness into a new *genre* of critical creation.

METRIC FIGURE

There is a bird in the poplars—
It is the sun!
The leaves are little yellow fish
Swimming in the river;
The bird skims above them—
Day is on his wings.
Phoenix!
It is he that is making
The great gleam among the poplars.
It is his singing
Outshines the noise
Of leaves clashing in the wind.

PEACE ON EARTH

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Bears are abroad!
The Eagle is screaming!
Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining;
Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!
Gold against blue
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven—
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

DAWN

Ecstatic bird songs pound
the hollow vastness of the sky
with metallic clinkings—
beating color up into it
at a far edge,—beating it, beating it
with rising, triumphant ardor,—
stirring it into warmth,
quickening in it a spreading change,—
bursting wildly against it as
dividing the horizon, a heavy sun
lifts himself—is lifted—
bit by bit above the edge
of things,—runs free at last
out into the open—! lumbering
glorified in full release upward—
songs cease.

POEM

By the road to the contagious hospital,
under the surge of the blue
mottled clouds driven from the
northeast—cold wind. Beyond, the
waste of broad, muddy fields,
brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen,

patches of standing water,
the scattering of tall trees.

All along the road the reddish,
purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy
stuff of brushes and small trees
with dead, brown leaves under them
leafless vines—

Lifeless in appearance, sluggish,
dazed spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked,
cold, uncertain of all
save that they enter. All about them
the cold, familiar wind—

Now the grass, tomorrow
the stiff curl of wild-carrot leaf.

One by one objects are defined—
It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf,

But now the stark dignity of
entrance— Still, the profound change
has come upon them; rooted, they
grip down and begin to awaken.

ON GAY WALLPAPER

The green-blue ground
is ruled with silver lines
to say the sun is shining

And on this mural sea
of grass or dreams lie flowers
or baskets of desires

Heaven knows what they are
between cerulean shapes
laid regularly round

Mat roses and tridentate
leaves of gold
threes, threes and threes

Three roses and three stems
the basket floating
standing in the horns of blue

Repeated to the ceiling
to the windows
where the day

Blows in
the scalloped curtains to
the sound of rain.

ALFRED KREYMBORG

Alfred Kreymborg was born in New York City, December 10, 1883. His education was spasmodic, his childhood being spent beneath the roar of the elevated trains. At ten he was an expert chess player, devoting practically all his time to a study of the game. Later, he became a bookkeeper and demonstrator of mechanical player-pianos; from seventeen to twenty-five he supported himself by teaching chess and playing exhibition games. His passion, however, was not mathematics but music. He dreamed of extending the borders of poetry into the realms of tonic art, experimented with new systems of notation, technicalities of rhythm. At thirty, he began to turn to the theater as a medium, finding, in this way, fresh contacts that enriched and ripened him.

In 1914, he organized that group of radical poets which, half-deprecatingly, half-defiantly, called itself "Others." (He edited the three anthologies of their work published in 1916, 1917 and 1919.) Meanwhile he had been working on a technique that was an attempt to rid poetry of its too frequent wordiness and rhetorical non-essentials. *Mushrooms* (1916) was the first collection in this vein. Here Kreymborg continually sought for simplification, cutting away at his lines until they assumed an almost naked expression. Often he overdid his effects, attaining nothing more than a false ingenuousness, a sophisticated simplicity. Often, too, he failed to draw the line between what is innocently childlike and what is merely childish.

But Kreymborg, for all harlequin gestures, could do something better than tumble and talk with his tongue in his cheek. An acrobatic fantasy and no little beauty of thought were his when he wanted to use them. Whimsicality and passages of bright color distinguish his *Plays for Poem-Mimes* (1918), as well as the more

developed *Plays for Merry Andrews* (1920), in which the principles of modern art are applied to poetry and acting.

Kreymborg's *Blood of Things* (1920) is, for all the surface oddities, the work not only of an apt conjurer but a serious thinker. Humor is in these pages, but it is humor lifted. Here, in spite of what seems a persistence of occasional affectations is a rich and sensitive imagination, a fancy that is as wild as it is quick-witted.

Puppet Plays, with a preface by Gordon Craig, appeared in 1923. Although in its predetermination to preserve an open-eyed wonder, Kreymborg's marionette-like emotions are often too doll-charming or too doll-tragic, these miniature dramas are appealing and witty. However, nothing which Kreymborg had written up to this time had prepared his readers for the volume which appeared a few months later. *Less Lonely* (1923) is not merely Kreymborg's most diverse volume, it is a new Kreymborg. A portion of it is in the idiom which the poet has made his own, but the greater part of the volume is in the shape of conventional verse—the actual form, that is, is conventional although Kreymborg's turn of thought is original. Besides the surprisingly neat quatrains scattered through the three sections, there are couplets that display a delicately personal touch; there are even thirty orthodox sonnets. These simple formalities stood him in good stead in *Funnybone Alley* (1927) which combined quaint prose with city jingles for children. Kreymborg's belated love of the sonnet was, unfortunately, not reciprocated. *The Lost Sail* (1928) is a loose journal in which the sonnets suffer from long drawn-out casualness. The technique is clumsy, the presentation inadequate; worse still, the sentimental note struck tentatively in the early poems is sounded by all the instruments *con amore*. Much of the poet's warmth, his enthusiasms and friendships emanate from this haphazard day-book; if the sonnet-form betrays him into writing without distinction, the subject matter reveals him favorably as a human being. *Manhattan Men* (1929) is a compromise between Kreymborg's first and later manners.

Besides his poetry, Kreymborg is guilty of several premature novels and, during intervals between the founding of various experimental magazines, many prose sketches. *Troubadour* (1925) is his winning autobiography. With the exception of the last few sections which degenerate into mere lists of names and places, this is an intimate record of an artist's quest to establish himself in the midst of a commercial civilization. Direct and unaffected, *Troubadour*, with its pictures of Greenwich Village during the Nineties, reveals Kreymborg no less fully than does his verse.

As a chronicler, Kreymborg is not at all the fantastic recorder one might expect from his verse. *Our Singing Strength* (1929)

is a sober categorical outline of American poetry from Colonial times with especial if over-personal emphasis on the contemporary scene.

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun
and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom;
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:
one who is more than intimate
in having been, always,
the only confidant—
like the earth
or the sea.

DAWNS

I have come
from pride
all the way up to humility
This day-to-night.
The hill
was more terrible
than ever before.
This is the top;
there is the tall, slim tree.
It isn't bent; it doesn't lean;
It is only looking back.
At dawn,
under that tree,
still another me of mine
was buried.
Waiting for me to come again,
humorously solicitous

of what I bring next,
it looks down.

IMPROVISATION

Wind:
Why do you play
that long beautiful adagio,
that archaic air,
tonight.
Will it never end?
Or is it the beginning,
some prelude you seek?

Is it a tale you strum?
Yesterday, yesterday—
Have you no more for us?

Wind:
Play on.
There is nor hope
nor mutiny
in you.

ADVERTISEMENT

We want a man of forty for the job.
One who has enjoyed his little fill of romance.
And suffered intermittent indigestion ever since.
One whose memories are sufficiently cold
  successfully to resist the embraces of truancy.
To whom a mountain
  no longer looms an ideal
  to scramble up and tumble down,
  but is an actual thing made of stone
  bristling with multitudinous edges
  to bark one's shins or break one's neck upon.
To whom a lake or river
  or other body of water
  no longer entices the search for one's likeness
  (we only ask a man to be himself

and not go diving after phantoms),
but is a place one might readily drown in,
one's muscles no longer quite what they were.
Who has achieved
that ultimate disillusionment:
not to be able to differentiate
the respective features, limbs or what not
of his whilom Graces and Gwendolyns,
and if he could wouldn't want to,
would devote the rest of his days to a desk
piled sky-high with ledgers and cash-books:
Such a man would be certain to stick.
We want such a man for the job.

PEASANT

It's the mixture of peasantry
makes him so slow.
He waggles his head
before he speaks,
like a cow
before she crops.
He bends to the habit
of dragging his feet
up under him,
like a measuring-worm:
some of his forefathers,
stooped over books,
ruled short straight lines
under two rows of figures
to keep their thin savings
from sifting to the floor.
Should you strike him
with a question,
he will blink twice or thrice
and roll his head about,
like an owl
in the pin-pricks
of a dawn he cannot see.
There is mighty little flesh
about his bones,

there is no gusto
in his stride:
he seems to wait
for the blow on the buttocks
that will drive him
another step forward—
step forward to what?
There is no land,
no house,
no barn,
he has ever owned;
he sits uncomfortable
on chairs
you might invite him to:
if you did,
he'd keep his hat in hand
against the moment
when some silent pause
for which he hearkens
with his ear to one side
bids him move on—
move on where?
It doesn't matter.
He has learned
to shrug his shoulders,
so he'll shrug his shoulders now:
caterpillars do it
when they're halted by a stick.
Is there a sky overhead?—
a hope worth flying to?—
Birds may know about it,
but it's birds
that birds descend from.

CITY SPARROW

Who's that dusty stranger? What's he doing here?
That city-bred bird with the ill-bred leer?

Perching on branches like telegraph wires?
Chirping his slang about passionate fires?

Poking his head about, twitching his tail,
Getting drunk in our pools as if they were ale?

Never accepting, but stealing our rations?
Acting toward us as he would to relations?

Who asked him hither, what led him this way?
With his critical carping, his mockery, eh?

And worse than all these, he's a jerky reminder
Of winters, of towns, and of people no kinder.

CROCUS

When trees have lost remembrance of the leaves
that spring bequeathes to summer, autumn weaves
and loosens mournfully—this dirge, to whom
does it belong—who treads the hidden loom?

When peaks are overwhelmed with snow and ice,
and clouds with crêpe bedeck and shroud the skies—
nor any sun or moon or star, it seems,
can wedge a path of light through such black dreams—

All motion cold, and dead all trace thereof:
What sudden shock below, or spark above,
starts torrents raging down till rivers surge—
that aid the first small crocus to emerge?

The earth will turn and spin and fairly soar,
that couldn't move a tortoise-foot before—
and planets permeate the atmosphere
till misery depart and mystery clear!—

And yet, so insignificant a hearse?—
who gave it the endurance so to brave
such elements?—shove winter down a grave?—
and then lead on again the universe?

Arturo Giovannitti was born in Abruzzi, Italy, January 7, 1884. He studied at the college of his native province and came to New York when he was eighteen years old. Even as a child Giovannitti had dreamed of America and had "learned upon the knees of his mother and father to reverence, with tears in his eyes, the name of the republic." With the dream of America as the great liberator in his heart, his first impressions were shattering. What he saw, through the eyes of the laborer, were whiplash and legal trickery, the few ruling the many, the miseries and exploitation of the helpless. He thought of becoming a preacher, attended theological school; sought a greater outlet for his passion for democracy and became an editor; lectured, wrote pamphlets and worked continually to express "a multitude of men lost in an immensity of silence."

Although Giovannitti has written several books in Italian, his one English volume is *Arrows in the Gale* (1914). In an eloquent introduction to the poet's rough music, Helen Keller writes, "He makes us feel the presence of toilers behind tenement walls, behind the machinery they guide. . . . He finds voice for his message in the sighs, the dumb hopes, the agonies and thwartings of men who are bowed and broken by the monster hands of machines."

Several of Giovannitti's poems are in rhyme, but his most characteristic lines move in uplifted prose poems that shape themselves vividly to their subjects. "The Cage," with its restrained anger, and "The Walker" are typical. "The Walker," unfortunately too long to quote in its entirety, is remarkable, not only as an artwork, but as a document; it is a twentieth-century "Ballad of Reading Gaol," with an intensity and social power of which Wilde was incapable.

FROM "THE WALKER"

I hear footsteps over my head all night.
They come and they go. Again they come and they go all night.
They come one eternity in four paces and they go one eternity in four paces, and between the coming and the going there is Silence and the Night and the Infinite.
For infinite are the nine feet of a prison cell, and endless is the march of him who walks between the yellow brick wall and the red iron gate, thinking things that cannot be chained and cannot be locked, but that wander far away

in the sunlit world, each in a wild pilgrimage after a destined goal.

. . . . . .

Throughout the restless night I hear the footsteps over my head.

Who walks? I know not. It is the phantom of the jail, the sleepless brain, a man, the man, the Walker.

One-two-three-four: four paces and the wall.

One-two-three-four: four paces and the iron gate.

He has measured his space, he has measured it accurately, scrupulously, minutely, as the hangman measures the rope and the gravedigger the coffin—so many feet, so many inches, so many fractions of an inch for each of the four paces.

One-two-three-four. Each step sounds heavy and hollow over my head, and the echo of each step sounds hollow within my head as I count them in suspense and in dread that once, perhaps, in the endless walk, there may be five steps instead of four between the yellow brick wall and the red iron gate.

But he has measured the space so accurately, so scrupulously, so minutely that nothing breaks the grave rhythm of the slow, fantastic march.

. . . . . .

All through the night he walks and he thinks.

Is it more frightful because he walks and his footsteps sound hollow over my head, or because he thinks and speaks not his thoughts?

But does he think? Why should he think? Do I think? I only hear the footsteps and count them. Four steps and the wall. Four steps and the gate. But beyond? Beyond? Where goes he beyond the gate and the wall?

He goes not beyond. His thought breaks there on the iron gate. Perhaps it breaks like a wave of rage, perhaps like a sudden flow of hope, but it always returns to beat the wall like a billow of helplessness and despair.

He walks to and fro within the narrow whirlpit of this ever storming and furious thought. Only one thought—constant, fixed, immovable, sinister, without power and without voice.

A thought of madness, frenzy, agony and despair, a hell-brewed thought, for it is a natural thought. All things natural are things impossible while there are jails in the world—bread, work, happiness, peace, love.

But he thinks not of this. As he walks he thinks of the most superhuman, the most unattainable, the most impossible thing in the world:

He thinks of a small brass key that turns just half around and throws open the red iron gate.

. . . . . .

That is all the Walker thinks, as he walks throughout the night.

And that is what two hundred minds drowned in the darkness and silence of the night think, and that is also what I think.

Wonderful is the supreme wisdom of the jail that makes all think the same thought. Marvelous is the providence of the law that equalizes all, even in mind and sentiment. Fallen is the last barrier of privilege, the aristocracy of the intellect. The democracy of reason has leveled all the two hundred minds to the common surface of the same thought.

I, who have never killed, think like the murderer;

I, who have never stolen, reason like the thief;

I think, reason, hope, doubt, wait like the hired assassin, the embezzler, the forger, the counterfeiter, the incestuous, the raper, the drunkard, the prostitute, the pimp—I, I who used to think of love and life and flowers and song and beauty and the ideal.

A little key, a little key as little as my little finger, a little key of shining brass.

All my ideas, my thoughts, my dreams are congealed in a little key of shiny brass. . . .

WILBERT SNOW

Wilbert Snow was born April 6, 1884, on White Head Island, off the coast of Maine. His early years were spent in his own state; he became, at various times, a lobster-catcher, a deep-sea fisherman, a sailor, a country school teacher (all in Maine), an Eskimo-

and reindeer-agent for the Department of the Interior in Alaska. Graduating from Bowdoin College in 1907, he obtained his M.A. at Columbia University in 1910 and taught English subsequently at seven American colleges.

Maine Coast (1923) and *The Inner Harbor* (1926) manifest Snow's obvious though perhaps unconscious debt to Robert Frost. But beneath the derivations there is much that comes straight from Snow's own experience and observation. In connection with the poems here reprinted, a reading of "Advice to a Clam-Digger" and "A Northeaster" reveals this poet's background and gives a more complete presentation of his characteristics.

TAKING AWAY THE BANKING

When March winds carried prophecies of June,
And gray days were no longer winter-killed,
We all went out and worked till afternoon
To take the spruce-limb banking off, and filled
The air with shouts, heaping what soon would be
A bonfire blazing by the willow-tree.

We tugged at big ends of the bottom brush,
The small ends as reluctant to let go
As winter was himself, although the rush
Of warmth, once started, was an overflow
Of sunny days, blue-birds, and brooklets racing
Like children from worn mothers, tired of chasing.

We found that spring already underneath
Had started on his work; the light-blown grasses
Were flaunting spots of green, the little teeth
Of mice and snouts of worms had chiseled passes—
Worms we sent wiggling as a tempting cud
For hungry flounders coming out of mud.

O, there were ugly days enough to come,
With rain and sleet and April fluffs of snow,
Big winds that moaned and made the wires hum,
And neighbors calling out, "We told you so!"
But looking on it now I think the days
We coaxed the spring along, and felt the rays

Of March intensify the balsam smell
In those green boughs, and saw the underpinning
Exposed once more, and children run pellmell
To hunt for crocuses, set fancies spinning
More rapidly than blooming hours of May
When all the hills of God kept holiday.

JANUARY THAW

Noon, and the tall black trees
That lean on the frozen river
Shed drops too mild to freeze
Though the sun seems gone forever.

Elm-tops melt in the mist,
The gray-white mist that throws
A mantle of amethyst
As far as the sky-line goes.

A melting that helps to trace
On patches of smooth blue ice
Contours of motley grace
In the road-bed's fall and rise.

Contours I will not break,
But will drive far out around,
That beauty may not forsake
This cold, hard ground.

EUNICE TIETJENS

Eunice (Strong Hammond) Tietjens was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 29, 1884. When fourteen, she made the first of many trips to Europe, remaining there for seven years. She married Paul Tietjens, the composer, in 1904. During 1914 and 1916 she was Associate Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* and went to France as war correspondent of the Chicago *Daily News* (1917-18). Her second marriage (to Cloyd Head, the writer) occurred in February, 1920.

Profiles from China (1917) is a series of sketches of people, scenes and incidents observed in the interior during two years'

sojourn. Written in fluent free verse, the poems in this collection are alive with color and personality. The succeeding *Body and Raiment* (1919) is less integrated, more derivative and diffuse. Yet, in spite of certain obvious echoes, individual poems like "The Drug Clerk," "The Steam Shovel" and a few others are worthy to stand beside her first volume.

Profiles from Home (1925) attempts to do for the United States what Mrs. Tietjens' first volume did for China. It is, unfortunately, as disappointing as its predecessor was distinguished. *Profiles from Home* contains a few interesting sardonic commentaries; as poetry it is dull, never rising above a pedestrian level. *Leaves in Windy Weather* (1929), a miscellaneous collection, lacks the unity but recaptures the integrity of her early work.

Poetry of the Orient (1928) is a large anthology of the classic secular verse of the major Eastern nations smoothly and sometimes memorably paraphrased.

THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow six thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks of green; and lower down the flat brown plain, the floor of earth, stretches away to blue infinity.
Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity—a swift, white peace, a presence manifest.
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is the end that has no end.

Here when Confucius came, a half a thousand years before the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus into timelessness.
The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that says: *On this spot once Confucius stood and felt the smallness of the world below.*

The stone grows old.
Eternity
Is not for stones.
But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift white peace, this stinging exultation;
And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the rhythm of the daily round.
Yet, having known, life will not press so close,
And always I shall feel time ravel thin about me.
For once I stood
In the white windy presence of eternity.

THE DRUG CLERK

The drug clerk stands behind the counter
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .

Before him burn the great unwinking lights,
The hectic stars of city nights,
Red as hell's pit, green as a mermaid's hair.
A queer half-acrid smell is in the air.
Behind him on the shelves in ordered rows
With strange, abbreviated names
Dwell half the facts of life. That young man knows
Bottled and boxed and powdered here,
Dumb tragedies, deceptions, secret shames,
And comedy and fear.

Sleep slumbers here, like a great quiet sea
Shrunk to this bottle's compass; sleep that brings
Sweet respite from the teeth of pain
To those poor tossing things
That the white nurses watch so thoughtfully.
And here again
Dwell the shy souls of Maytime flowers
That shall make sweeter still those poignant hours
When wide-eyed youth looks on the face of love.
And, for those others who have found too late
The bitter fruits thereof,
Here are cosmetics, powders, paints,—the arts
That hunted women use to hunt again

With scented flesh for bait.
And here is comfort for the hearts
Of sucking babes in their first teething pain.
Here dwells the substance of huge fervid dreams,
Fantastic, many-colored, shot with gleams
Of ecstasy and madness, that shall come
To some pale, twitching sleeper in a bunk.
And here is courage, cheaply bought
To cure a blue sick funk,
And dearly paid for in the final sum.
Here in this powdered fly is caught
Desire more ravishing than Tarquin's rape
And bloody-handed murder. And at last
When the one weary hope is past
Here is the sole escape,
The little postern in the house of breath
Where pallid fugitives keep tryst with death.

All this the drug clerk knows and there he stands,
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .
He rests a pair of slender hands,
Much manicured, upon the counter there
And speaks: "No, we don't carry no pomade,
We only cater to the high-class trade."

SARA TEASDALE

Sara Teasdale was born August 8, 1884, in St. Louis, Missouri, and educated there. After leaving school she traveled in Europe and the Near East, married, and moved to New York in 1916. Living in seclusion, she died there suddenly January 28, 1933.

Her first book was a slight volume, *Sonnets to Duse* (1907), giving little promise of the lyricism to follow. *Helen of Troy and Other Poems* (1911) contains the first hints of that delicate craftsmanship which this poet brought to such a high pitch. The six monologues which open the volume are written in a blank verse as musical as many of her lyrics. At times her quatrains suffer from too conscious a cleverness; the dexterity with which Miss Teasdale turns a phrase or twists her last line is frequently too obtrusive to be unreservedly enjoyable.

Rivers to the Sea (1915) emphasizes this epigrammatic skill, but a greater restraint is here. The new collection contains at

least a dozen unforgettable snatches, lyrics in which the words seem to fall into place without art or effort. Seldom employing metaphor or striking imagery, almost bare of ornament, these poems have the magic of folk-song. Theirs is an artlessness that is something more than an art.

Love Songs (1917) is a collection of Miss Teasdale's previous melodies for the *viola d'amore* together with several in which the turns are no longer obviously unexpected. The new poems emphasize a sensitivity achieved without verbal subtleties. They also emphasize their superiority to the earlier love lyrics that were written in a mood of literary romance, of artificial roses, languishing lutes, moonlit balconies, passionate guitars—a mood that was less careless than cultivated.

Flame and Shadow (1920; revised edition, published in England, in 1924) is the ripest of her books. Here the emotion is fuller and deeper; an almost mystic radiance plays from these verses. Technically, also, this volume marks Miss Teasdale's greatest advance. The words are chosen with a keener sense of their actual as well as their musical values; the rhythms are much more subtle and varied; the line moves with a greater naturalness. Beneath the symbolism of poems like "Water Lilies," "The Long Hill," and "Let It Be Forgotten," one is conscious of a finer artistry, a more flexible speech that is all the lovelier for its slight (and logical) irregularities.

After *Flame and Shadow* Miss Teasdale's theme became somewhat autumnal. Though never funereal, the songs are preoccupied with the coming of age, the gathering of night, the mutability of things. *Dark of the Moon* (1926) is more thoughtful than any other previous verse. It is, as the title indicates, even more somber. If the movement is slower it is a no less delicate music that moves under the surface rhythms. "Wisdom," "The Solitary," "The Flight" may not be the most popular poems that Miss Teasdale has written, but they must be numbered among her best. Hers is a disillusion without cynicism; her proud acceptance of life's darker aspects adds new dignity to the old lyricism.

Besides her own books, Miss Teasdale has compiled an anthology, *The Answering Voice* (1917), comprising one hundred love lyrics by women, and a collection for children, *Rainbow Gold* (1922).

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI

I asked the heaven of stars
  What I should give my love—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
  Down where the fishermen go—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,
  Or I could give him song—
But how can I give silence
  My whole life long?

SPRING NIGHT

The park is filled with night and fog,
  The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
  Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
  Gold and gleaming the misty lake,
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
  Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love
With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,—
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light,—
I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

I SHALL NOT CARE

When I am dead and over me bright April
  Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
  I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
  When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
  Than you are now.

THE LONG HILL

I must have passed the crest a while ago
  And now I am going down—
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,
  But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

All the morning I thought how proud I should be
  To stand there straight as a queen,
Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me—
  But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen.

It was nearly level along the beaten track
  And the brambles caught in my gown—
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
  The rest of the way will be only going down.

WATER-LILIES

If you have forgotten water-lilies floating
  On a dark lake among mountains in the afternoon shade,
If you have forgotten their wet, sleepy fragrance,
  Then you can return and not be afraid.

But if you remember, then turn away forever
  To the plains and the prairies where pools are far apart,
There you will not come at dusk on closing water-lilies,
  And the shadow of mountains will not fall on your heart.

"LET IT BE FORGOTTEN"

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If any one asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long-forgotten snow.

WISDOM

It was a night of early spring,
The winter-sleep was scarcely broken;
Around us shadows and the wind
Listened for what was never spoken.

Though half a score of years are gone,
Spring comes as sharply now as then—
But if we had it all to do
It would be done the same again.

It was a spring that never came;
But we have lived enough to know
That what we never have, remains;
It is the things we have that go.

THE SOLITARY

My heart has grown rich with the passing of years,
I have less need now than when I was young
To share myself with every comer,
Or shape my thoughts into words with my tongue.

It is one to me that they come or go
If I have myself and the drive of my will,
And strength to climb on a summer night
And watch the stars swarm over the hill.

Let them think I love them more than I do,
Let them think I care, though I go alone,
If it lifts their pride, what is it to me,
Who am self-complete as a flower or a stone?

THE CRYSTAL GAZER

I shall gather myself into myself again,
I shall take my scattered selves and make them one,
I shall fuse them into a polished crystal ball
Where I can see the moon and the flashing sun.

I shall sit like a sibyl, hour after hour intent,
Watching the future come and the present go—
And the little shifting pictures of people rushing
In tiny self-importance to and fro.

APPRAISAL

Never think she loves him wholly,
Never believe her love is blind,
All his faults are locked securely
In a closet of her mind;
All his indecisions folded
Like old flags that time has faded,
Limp and streaked with rain,
And his cautiousness like garments
Frayed and thin, with many a stain—
Let them be, oh, let them be,
There is treasure to outweigh them,
His proud will that sharply stirred,
Climbs as surely as the tide,
Senses strained too taut to sleep,
Gentleness to beast and bird,
Humor flickering hushed and wide
As the moon on moving water,
And a tenderness too deep
To be gathered in a word.

ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

Over the downs there were birds flying,
Far off glittered the sea,
And toward the north the weald of Sussex
Lay like a kingdom under me.

I was happier than the larks
That nest on the downs and sing to the sky—
Over the downs the birds flying
Were not so happy as I.

It was not you, though you were near,
Though you were good to hear and see;
It was not earth, it was not heaven,
It was myself that sang in me.

AUGUST NIGHT

On a midsummer night, on a night that was eerie with stars,
In a wood too deep for a single star to look through,
You led down a path whose turnings you knew in the darkness,
But the scent of the dew-dripping cedars was all that I knew.

I drank of the darkness, I was fed with the honey of fragrance,
I was glad of my life, the drawing of breath was sweet;
I heard your voice, you said, "Look down, see the glow-worm!"
It was there before me, a small star white at my feet.

We watched while it brightened as though it were breathed on and burning,
This tiny creature moving over earth's floor—
"'*L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle,*'"
You said, and no more.

EFFIGY OF A NUN

(*Sixteenth Century*)

Infinite gentleness, infinite irony
Are in this face with fast-sealed eyes,
And round this mouth that learned in loneliness
How useless their wisdom is to the wise.

In her nun's habit carved, patiently, lovingly,
By one who knew the ways of womankind,
This woman's face still keeps, in its cold wistful calm,
All of the subtle pride of her mind.

These long patrician hands, clasping the crucifix,
Show she had weighed the world, her will was set;
These pale curved lips of hers, holding their hidden smile
Once having made their choice, knew no regret.

She was of those who hoard their own thoughts carefully,
Feeling them far too dear to give away,
Content to look at life with the high, insolent
Air of an audience watching a play.

If she was curious, if she was passionate
She must have told herself that love was great,
But that the lacking it might be as great a thing
If she held fast to it, challenging fate.

She who so loved herself and her own warring thoughts,
Watching their humorous, tragic rebound,
In her thick habit's fold, sleeping, sleeping,
Is she amused at dreams she has found?

Infinite tenderness, infinite irony
Are hidden forever in her closed eyes,
Who must have learned too well in her long loneliness
How empty wisdom is, even to the wise.

THE FLIGHT

We are two eagles
Flying together,
Under the heavens,
Over the mountains,
Stretched on the wind.
Sunlight heartens us,
Blind snow baffles us,
Clouds wheel after us,
Raveled and thinned.

We are like eagles;
But when Death harries us,
Human and humbled
When one of us goes,
Let the other follow—
Let the flight be ended,
Let the fire blacken,
Let the book close.

MARGARET WIDDEMER

Margaret Widdemer was born at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and began writing in her childhood. After graduating from Drexel Institute Library School in 1909, she contributed to various magazines.

Miss Widdemer's poetic work has two distinct phases. In the one mood, she is the protesting poet, the champion of the down-trodden, the lyricist on fire with angry passion. In the other, she is the writer of well-made, polite and popular sentimental verse. Her early poems are in *Factories with Other Lyrics* (1915); more quotable songs are in *The Old Road to Paradise* (1918), which divided, with Sandburg's *Cornhuskers*, the Pulitzer Poetry Prize in 1918. *Cross Currents* (1921) and *Ballads and Lyrics* (1925) are her most recent collections. *The Singing Wood* is a poetic play and *A Tree with a Bird in It* won the *Literary Review* prize for satires in 1923.

Miss Widdemer is also the author of three books of short stories, six novels and several books for girls.

FACTORIES

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing time was done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sun-lit dark?

I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest—
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

DuBOSE HEYWARD

DuBose Heyward was born in Charleston, South Carolina, August 31, 1885, of English and French Huguenot stock. He was educated in his native state, and has lived there most of his life, spending part of the time in Charleston and the remainder in the North Carolina mountains.

His first volume, *Carolina Chansons* (1922), was written in collaboration with Hervey Allen. It is a laudable experiment, an effort to reproduce the haunted atmosphere of that part of the South which these two poets represent. *Skylines and Horizons* (1924) continues if it does not quite fulfill the promise of Heyward's first offering. Though less self-consciously autochthonous, it is no less redolent of the spirit of the South. The contents range from the misty evocations of the Low Country to the primitive strength of the cycle written in the Great Smokies, of which "A Yoke of Steers" is an example.

Though Heyward began as a writer of verse, his popularity rests on his more accurate prose. *Porgy* (1925) was one of the most successful works of the decade, having made an instantaneous appeal as a novel and, two years later, as a play. *Mamba's Daughters* (1929) is, like *Porgy*, an interpretation as well as a picture of Negro life, an achievement in color and contrasts on a larger scale.

A YOKE OF STEERS

A heave of mighty shoulders to the yoke,
Square, patient heads, and flaring sweep of horn;
The darkness swirling down beneath their feet
Where sleeping valleys stir, and feel the dawn;

Uncouth and primal, on and up they sway,
Taking the summit in a drench of day.
The night-winds volley upward bitter-sweet,
And the dew shatters to a rainbow spray
Under the slow-moving, cloven feet.

There is a power here that grips the mind;
A force repressed and inarticulate,
Slow as the swing of centuries, as blind
As destiny, and as deliberate.

They will arrive in their appointed hour
Unhurried by the goad of lesser wills,
Bearing vast burdens on.
They are the great
Unconquerable spirit of these hills.

GLADYS CROMWELL

Gladys Cromwell was born November 28, 1885, in New York City. She was educated in New York private schools and lived abroad a great deal. "Her life," writes Anne Dunn, "was little indented by outer events, being wholly of the mind and spirit." She was most at home in the world within herself, sensitive and —to the final, tragic degree—self-effacing.

In January, 1918, Gladys and Dorothea, her twin-sister, enrolled in the Canteen Service of the Red Cross, sailed for France and were stationed at Châlons. Both girls worked unremittingly for eight months. It was only at the end of their desperate labors that they gave way to hopelessness, believing their efforts futile and the whole world desolate. Signs of a mental breakdown occur in their diaries as early as October. "After the armistice," writes Anne Dunn in her biographical note which serves as an epilogue to Gladys Cromwell's *Poems*, "they showed symptoms of nervous prostration; but years of self-control and consideration for others made them conceal the black horror in which they lived, the agony through which they saw a world which, they felt, contained no refuge for beauty or quiet thought. And when, on their way home, they jumped from the deck of the *Lorraine* it was in response to a vision that promised them fulfillment and peace." After their death, which occurred January 19, 1919, the French Government awarded the two sisters the Croix de Guerre.

Gates of Utterance (1915) has something more than the usual

"promise." But the best of Miss Cromwell's work can be found in her posthumously published *Poems* (1919), which, in 1920, received the yearly prize offered by the Poetry Society of America, dividing the honor with Neihardt's *The Song of Three Friends.* Gladys Cromwell's most significant poems betray that attitude to life which was at the heart of her tragedy—a preoccupation that was a mixture of fascination and fear. Her lines, never mediocre, are introspective and taut with serious concern. A few of her delicate songs, like the two lyrics quoted, tremble on the verge of something great just beyond the power of achievement.

THE CROWNING GIFT

I have had courage to accuse;
And a fine wit that could upbraid;
And a nice cunning that could bruise;
And a shrewd wisdom, unafraid
Of what weak mortals fear to lose.

I have had virtue to despise
The sophistry of pious fools;
I have had firmness to chastise;
And intellect to make me rules
To estimate and exorcise.

I have had knowledge to be true;
My faith could obstacles remove;
But now my frailty I endue.
I would have courage now to love,
And lay aside the strength I knew.

THE MOULD

No doubt this active will,
So bravely steeped in sun,
This will has vanquished death
And foiled oblivion.

But this indifferent clay,
This fine, experienced hand
So quiet, and these thoughts
That all unfinished stand,

Feel death as though it were
A shadowy caress;
And win and wear a frail
Archaic wistfulness.

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS

Elizabeth Madox Roberts was born in 1885, at Perryville, near Springfield, Kentucky, and attended the University of Chicago, where she received her Ph.B. in 1921. Except when obliged to travel for health or warmth, she lives in the Salt River country of Kentucky, twenty-eight miles from Harrodsburg, old Fort Harrod, the first settlement in the state.

As an undergraduate she won the local Fiske Prize with a group of poems which later appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. An amplification of these verses appeared as *Under the Tree* (1922) and critics were quick to recognize the unusually fresh accents in this first volume. *Under the Tree* spoke directly to the young, for it was written, not so much for children, but as a child—an alert and sensitive child—would write. The observation is precise, the reflections are candidly clear, the humor delicate, never simpering or archly beribboned. Here is a simplicity which is straight-forward without being shrill or (as so many grown-up records of childhood are) mincing. The verse is graceful where grace commands the gesture, but Miss Roberts' unforced *naïveté* allows her to be gauche whenever awkwardness is natural.

After this volume Miss Roberts returned to her native state, spending much of her time studying the archaic English speech still spoken in the remote parts of Kentucky. "Orpheus," although written later than her first book, is a highly interesting use of her early idiom, localizing as well as vitalizing the old myth. "Stranger" is more definitely indigenous; it has something of the flavor of the *Lonesome Tunes* collected by Howard Brockway and Loraine Wyman. Concerning this poem, Miss Roberts writes, "In these verses I have used material from the old ballads—or suggestions from them, material which may be found abundantly in Kentucky, together with modern syncopation and a refrain designed to call up banjo notes." "A Ballet Song of Mary," which won the John Reed Memorial Prize in *Poetry* (1928) is an "artificial" piece—using the adjective in the best sense—founded on ancient archaic words and uses. Here, as in her prose, Miss Roberts writes with an ear always tuned to local phrase and feeling.

In 1925 Miss Roberts turned to the prose for which she has been so widely celebrated. *The Time of Man* (1926), one of the

most moving novels of the period, is an epic of the Appalachians in which every chapter has the effect of a poem. *My Heart and My Flesh* (1927), a darker and more difficult exploration, discloses less local and more universal regions of the spirit. *Jingling in the Wind* (1928) is a less successful experiment, a light farce which tries but fails to be a satire on industrial civilization. All three are characterized by a grace and difference which set Miss Roberts apart from the competent writers of easy fictions.

The Great Meadow (1930) is an exploration of the material uncovered in her first novel. Placed in the Kentucky meadow-lands against the heroic backgrounds of early American history, it is a pioneering panorama. Native to the least grass-blade, it is much more than a narrative of the soil; it is a widening poem of the men and women who imposed themselves and their pattern on the unshaped wilderness. Thus *The Great Meadow* acts both as the preparation for and the rich completion of *The Time of Man.*

THE SKY

I saw a shadow on the ground
And heard a bluejay going by;
A shadow went across the ground,
And I looked up and saw the sky.

It hung up on the poplar tree,
But while I looked it did not stay;
It gave a tiny sort of jerk
And moved a little bit away.

And farther on and farther on
It moved and never seemed to stop.
I think it must be tied with chains
And something pulls it from the top.

It never has come down again,
And every time I look to see,
The sky is always slipping back
And getting far away from me.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

If Bethlehem were here today,
Or this were very long ago,
There wouldn't be a winter time
Nor any cold or snow.

I'd run out through the garden gate,
And down along the pasture walk;
And off beside the cattle barns
I'd hear a kind of gentle talk.

I'd move the heavy iron chain
And pull away the wooden pin;
I'd push the door a little bit
And tiptoe very softly in.

The pigeons and the yellow hens
And all the cows would stand away;
Their eyes would open wide to see
A lady in the manger hay,
If this were very long ago
And Bethlehem were here today.

And Mother held my hand and smiled—
I mean the lady would—and she
Would take the woolly blankets off
Her little boy so I could see.

His shut-up eyes would be asleep,
And he would look just like our John,
And he would be all crumpled too,
And have a pinkish color on.

I'd watch his breath go in and out.
His little clothes would all be white.
I'd slip my finger in his hand
To feel how he could hold it tight.

And she would smile and say, "Take care,"
The mother, Mary, would, "Take care";
And I would kiss his little hand
And touch his hair.

While Mary put the blankets back
The gentle talk would soon begin.
And when I'd tiptoe softly out
I'd meet the wise men going in.

ORPHEUS[1]

He could sing sweetly on a string.
He'd make the music curve around;
He'd make it tremble through the woods
And all the trees would leave the ground.

The tunes would walk on steps of air,
For in his hand a wire would sing;
The songs would fly like wild quick geese—
He could play sweetly on a string.

. . . . .

If Orpheus would come today,
Our trees would lean far out to hear,
And they would stretch limb after limb;
Then the ellum trees would leave the ground,
And the sycamores would follow him.

And the poplar tree and the locust tree
And the coffeeberry tree would come
And all the rows of osage thorns,
And then the little twisted plum.

He'd lead them off across the hill.
They'd flow like water toward his feet.
He'd walk through fields and turn in roads;
He'd bring them down our street.

And he'd go by the blacksmith shop,
And one would say, "Now who are these?—
I wonder who that fellow is,
And where he's going with the trees!"

"To the sawmill, likely," one would say,
"Oh, yes, the sawmill, I should think."
And then he'd cut the horse's hoof
And hammers would go *clink* and *clink*.

. . . . .

He could play sweetly on a wire.

[1] It is interesting to compare this localized version of the mythical wandering poet with H. Phelps Putnam's treatment of a like theme in "Ballad of a Strange Thing" on page 696.

And he would lean down near his lyre
To hear its songs unfold and wind,
And it would reach up toward his ear
To hear the music in his mind.

And when the road turned by the kiln,
Then Orpheus would happen to see
The little plum and the sycamore
And the poplar tree and the chinaberry tree,

And all the rows of osage thorns—
When he happened once to look—
He'd see them coming after him . . .
Three birches, and he'd see the oak.

And he would lead them back again.
He'd bring each one to its own ground.
He'd bring each to its growing-place
And set them back with sound and sound.

He'd fit them in with whispered chords,
And tap them down with humming words.

STRANGER

When Polly lived back in the old deep woods,
Sing, sing, sing and howdy, howdy-o!
Nobody ever went by her door,
Tum a-tum tum and danky, danky-o!

Valentine worked all day in the brush,
He grubbed out stumps and he chopped with his ax,
He chopped a clear road up out of the branch;
Their wheels made all the tracks.

And all they could see out doors were the trees,
And all the night they could hear the wolves go;
But one cold time when the dark came on
A man's voice said, "Hello, there, hello!"

He stood away by the black oak tree
When they opened the door in the halfway light;
He stood away by the buttonwood stump,
And Valentine said, "Won't you stay all night?"

He sat by the fire and warmed his bones.
He had something hidden down deep in a sack,
And Polly watched close while she baked her pones;
He felt of it once when she turned her back—
Polly had a fear of his sack.

Nobody lived this way or there,
And the night came down and the woods came dark,
A thin man sat by the fire that night,
And the cabin pane was one red spark.

He took the something out of his sack,
When the candle dimmed and the logs fell low,
It was something dark, as Polly could see,
Sing, sing, sing and howdy, howdy-o!

He held it up against his chest,
And the logs came bright with a fresh new glow,
And it was a fiddle that was on his breast,
Tum tum-a tum and danky, danky-o!

He played one tune and one tune more;
He played five tunes all in a long row.
The logs never heard any songs before.
Sing, sing, sing and howdy, howdy-o!

The tunes lay down like drowsy cats;
They tumbled over rocks where the waterfalls go;
They twinkled in the sun like little June gnats;
Tum a-tum tum and danky dee-o!

The stumps stood back in Valentine's mind;
The wolves went back so Polly couldn't see;
She forgot how they howled and forgot how they whined.
Tum tum a-tum and danky-dee!

The tunes flew by like wild quick geese,
Sing, sing, sing and howdy howdy-o!
And Polly said, "That's a right good piece."
Tum tum tum and danky danky-o!
Tum a-tum tum and danky dee-o!

A BALLET SONG OF MARY

Her smock was of the holland fine,
Skinkled with colors three;
Her shawl was of the velvet blue,
The Queen of Galilee.

Her hair was yellow like the wex,
Like the silken floss fine-spun;
The girdle for her golden cloak
Was all in gold bedone.

She sat her down in her own bower place
And dressed herself her hair.
Her gold kemb in her braid she laid,
And a sound fell on the door.

He came within her own bower room
"Hail, Mary, hail!" says he;
"A goodly grace is on your head,
For the Lord is now with thee."

She folded down her little white hands
When Gabriel spoke again.
She set her shawl, the corners right,
For ceremony then.

"And the God will overshadow thee
And bring a holy sweven.
Fear not, fear not," then Gabriel said,
"It's the God of the good high heaven.

"And what must be born it will heal the sick;
It will make a goodly lear;
It will fettle men for christentie
And to keep holy gear."

Then up then rose this little maid
When Gabriel's word was said,
And out of the bower she ran in haste,
And out of the hall she is sped.

She is running far to Zachary's house—
"Is this the way?" says she.
"A little maid in haste," they said,
"Has gone to the hills of Judee."

And what will be born it will ope their eyes;
It will hearten men in their stear;
It will fettle men for christentie
And to have holy gear.

It will scourge with a thong when those make gain
Where a humble man should be;
It will cast the witches from out of his saule
And drown them into the sea.

It will give men drink from the horn of the wind,
And give men meat from the song of a bird;
Their cloak they will get from the sheen of the grass,
And a roof from a singin' word.

And when they come to the Brig o' Dread,
And they cry, "I fall! I'm afear!"
It will close their eyes and give them sleep
To heal them outen their lonesome cheer,
When they come to the Brig o' Dread.

EZRA POUND

Ezra (Loomis) Pound was born at Hailey, Idaho, October 30, 1885, and entered the University of Pennsylvania at the age of fifteen. At sixteen, unbeknown to the faculty, he began studying comparative literature; before he was seventeen (in 1902) he enrolled as special student "to avoid irrelevant subjects." He continued the process at Hamilton College (1903-5) and from 1905 to 1907 was "Instructor with professorial functions" at the University of Pennsylvania. His next move brought him to Crawfords-

ville, Indiana—" 'the Athens of the West,' a town with literary traditions, Lew Wallace having died there." Pound was dismissed from Wabash College after four months—"all accusations," he says, "having been ultimately refuted save that of being 'the Latin Quarter type.' "

Though a born educator, actually burning to teach, Pound was compelled to seek less academic circles. In 1908 he landed in Gibraltar with eighty dollars and lived on the interest for some time. The same year found him for the first time in Italy, which was to become his future home. *A Lume Spento* (1908) was printed in Venice. A few months later he was established in London, where he lived until 1920. Convinced of the aridity of England, he crossed over to Paris, from which, after four years, he moved to Rapallo, on the Italian Riviera, where he has lived since 1924.

Shortly after Pound's arrival in London he published *Personae* (1909), a work which, though small, contains some of his most arresting verse.

Although the young American was a total stranger to the English literary world, his book made a definite impression on critics of all shades and tastes. Edward Thomas, one of the most cautious appraisers, wrote, "The beauty of it is the beauty of passion, sincerity and intensity, not of beautiful words and images and suggestions. . . . The thought dominates the words and is greater than they are." Another critic (Scott James) placed the chief emphasis on Pound's metrical innovations, saying, "At first the whole thing may seem to be mere madness and rhetoric, a vain exhibition of force and passion without beauty. But as we read on, these curious meters seem to have a law and order of their own."

Exultations (1909) was printed in the autumn of the same year that saw the appearance of *Personae*. It was received with even greater cordiality; a new force and freedom were manifest in such poems as "Sestina: Altaforte," "Ballad of the Goodly Fere," and the stark "Ballad for Gloom." Both books were republished in a single volume, with other poems, as *Personae* in 1926.

In both of these books there is evident Pound's erudition—a familiarity with medieval literature, Provençal singers, Troubadour ballads—an erudition which, later, was to degenerate into pedantry and become hard and sterile. Too often in his later work Pound seems to be more the archeologist than the artist, digging with tired energy and indiscriminate curiosity. *Canzoni* (1911) and *Ripostes* (1912) contain much that is sharp and living; they also contain the germs of desiccation and decay. Pound began to scatter his talents; to start movements which he quickly discarded for new ones; to spend himself in poetic propaganda for the Vorticists and others (see Preface); to give more and more time to translation

(*The Sonnets of Guido Cavalcanti* appeared in 1912) and arrangements from the Chinese (*Cathay*, paraphrased from the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, was issued in 1915); to lay the chief stress on technique, shades of color, verbal *nuances*. The result was a lassitude of the creative faculties, an impoverishment of emotion. In the later books, Pound begins to suffer from a decadence which appraises the values in life chiefly as esthetic values. And this decadence expresses itself in a weariness, in an exasperated, querulous attitude harmful if not fatal to the imagination.

But this is true only with reservations. Nor can an estimate of Pound be complete without an examination of his *Cantos*, a difficult task since they themselves are incomplete and almost inaccessible to the average reader. Twenty-seven cantos of this "poem of some length" have appeared—I-XVI in 1925, XVII-XXVII in 1928, both privately printed in de luxe volumes—and three more are being published with the others in a general edition. The poem, when and if complete, will comprise about one hundred cantos and is Pound's major opus. Complex in tonality, bewildering in its shifting of space and time, the scheme of the *Cantos* is reasoned and even formal: Pound is endeavoring to write a Human Comedy in three dimensions and many voices, using the repetitions of history as leitmotifs. The structure is intended to be fugual (with subject, response and counter-subject) and Pound, who has written music as well as words, has conceived the composition on a huge scale. Perplexing though the parts have been to his contemporaries, the work has already had its influence. Its sudden juxtapositions of the Homeric, the medieval, and the modern world, reveal the beginning of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Crane's *The Bridge*, and the accent of MacLeish's longer poems.

As propagandist Pound has played a more recognizable rôle. He fought for the musician Antheil, publishing a brochure on his harmonic experiments, wrote a study of Gaudier Brzeska (1916) when that sculptor was unknown, and championed a dozen innovators long before their imitators became popular. As a scholar his Provençal paraphrases remain as models, and *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti* was expanded into the elaborately annotated *The Poems of Guido Cavalcanti* in 1930.

Though much of *Lustra* (1917) and *Poems 1918-1922* seems drawn not from life but from literature, many of the poems yield something beyond brilliant anachronisms. The influence of Browning is less pronounced, and reflections of his earlier energy are manifest.

Finally, any attempt to do justice to Pound must take account of the chronology of his work in relation to that of others. He invented the term "Imagism" before the ensuing period of exploita-

tion. He published *Cathay* (1915), anticipating the flood of Chinese and Japanese translations that later inundated the country. He "placed" Tagore as literary artist, not as messiah, and saw the Bengalese poet become a cult. As early as 1922, he established (in the *Mercure de France*) the proportion between Flaubert and James Joyce when the author of *Ulysses* was an unknown name. Yet in 1930 Pound was able to say that no American publisher had ever accepted a book on his recommendation and no American cultural institution had ever invited him to lecture. This in spite of his *How to Read*, an exposition of a critical method and an evidence that his work had been done in pursuance of plan and coherent design.

Too special to achieve permanence, too intellectual to become popular, Pound's contribution to his age should not be underestimated. He was a pioneer in the new forms; he fought dullness wherever he encountered it. He helped to broaden many of the paths which a score of unconsciously influenced poets tread with such ease and nonchalance. Much of his poetry gesticulates instead of speaking, a great portion of his art is poetry in pantomime. And yet, without Pound, American poetry would scarcely have been the many-voiced, multi-colored thing that it is.

AN IMMORALITY

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

A VIRGINAL

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air has a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly

And left me cloaked as with a gauze of ether;
As with sweet leaves; as with a subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavor,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savor:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the veil.
When God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

GREEK EPIGRAM

Day and night are never weary,
Nor yet is God of creating
For day and night their torch-bearers
The aube and the crepuscule.

So, when I weary of praising the dawn and the sunset,
Let me be no more counted among the immortals;
But number me amid the wearying ones,
Let me be a man as the herd,
And as the slave that is given in barter.

BALLAD OF THE GOODLY FERE[1]

(*Simon Zelotes speaketh it somewhile after the Crucifixion*)

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye, lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye, he sent us out through the crossed high spears,
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh we drank his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company,
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere
But a man o' men was he.

[1] Fere = Mate, Companion.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
When they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no get him a' in a book I think
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and the blind,
And wake the dead," says he,
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I ha' seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free,
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee,
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the gray o' the sea.

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Gennesaret
Wi' twey words spoke' suddenly.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea,
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

A GIRL

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child—so high—you are;
And all this is folly to the world.

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

DANCE FIGURE

(*For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee*)

Dark eyed,
O woman of my dreams,
Ivory sandaled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet.

I have not found thee in the tents,
In the broken darkness.
I have not found thee at the well-head
Among the women with pitchers.

Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders;
As new almonds stripped from the husk.
They guard thee not with eunuchs;
Not with bars of copper.

Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy rest.
A brown robe with threads of gold woven in patterns hast thou
gathered about thee,
O Nathat-Ikanaie, "Tree-at-the-river."

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

Thy maidens are white like pebbles;
Their music about thee!

There is none like thee among the dancers;
None with swift feet.

ΔΩΡΙΑ

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gayety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of gray waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

SILET

When I behold how black, immortal ink
Drips from my deathless pen—ah, well-away!
Why should we stop at all for what I think?
There is enough in what I chance to say.

It is enough that we once came together;
What is the use of setting it to rime?
When it is autumn do we get spring weather,
Or gather may of harsh northwindish time?

It is enough that we once came together;
What if the wind have turned against the rain?
It is enough that we once came together;
Time has seen this, and will not turn again.

And who are we, who know that last intent,
To plague tomorrow with a testament!

PORTRAIT D'UNE FEMME[1]

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
London has swept about you this score years
And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.
Great minds have sought you—lacking some one else.
You have been second always. Tragical?
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
One average mind—with one thought less, each year.
Oh, you are patient. I have seen you sit
Hours, where something might have floated up.
And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
You are a person of some interest, one comes to you
And takes strange gain away:
Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,
Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
That might prove useful and yet never proves,
That never fits a corner or shows use,
Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;
Idols, and ambergris and rare inlays.
These are your riches, your great store; and yet
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 565.

Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
In the slow float of differing light and deep,
No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
Nothing that's quite your own.
Yet this is you.

THE RETURN

See, they return; ah see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the
uncertain
Wavering!

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the "Wing'd-with-Awe,"
Inviolable.

Gods of the wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These were the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men!

ENVOI

(*1919*)

Go, dumb-born book,
Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes:
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subjects known,

Then were there cause in thee that should condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie,
And build her glories their longevity.

Tell her that sheds
Such treasure in the air,
Recking naught else but that her graces give
Life to the moment,
I would bid them live
As roses might, in magic amber laid,
Red overwrought with orange and all made
One substance and one color
Braving time.

Tell her that goes
With song upon her lips
But sings not out the song, nor knows
The maker of it, some other mouth,
May be as fair as hers,
Might, in new ages, gain her worshipers,
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be laid,
Siftings on siftings in oblivion,
Till change hath broken down
All things save Beauty alone.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Louis Untermeyer was born October 1, 1885, in New York City, where he lived, except for brief intervals, until 1923. His schooling was fitful and erratic; he liked to boast that he was the least educated writer in America. He attended the De Witt Clinton High School, but his failure to comprehend the essentials of Geometry prevented him from graduating, and the halls of colleges were unknown to him until he became an occasional lecturer. In youth his one ambition was to be a composer. At sixteen he appeared as a semi-professional pianist; at seventeen he entered his father's jewelry manufacturing establishment. For almost twenty years he commuted to Newark, New Jersey, being advanced from designer to factory manager and vice-president. In 1923 he retired and, after two years of study abroad, returned to America to devote himself entirely to literature.

It is difficult for the present compiler to consider this writer as severely as he deserves, the editor not having attained toward himself that Olympian detachment which is the goal of criticism. However, it is evident that his work is divided into four kinds: his poetry, his parodies, his translations and his critical prose. His initial volume of verse, *First Love* (1911), was a sequence of some seventy lyrics in which the influences of Heine and Housman were not only obvious but crippling. With the exception of possibly three of these songs, the volume is devoid of character and, in spite of a certain technical ease, wholly undistinguished.

It was with *Challenge* (1914), reissued in a slightly revised edition in 1920, that the author first spoke in his own idiom. Although the ghost of Henley haunts many of these pages, and although the volume would benefit greatly by a few less "urges" and "surges," poems like "Prayer," "Swimmers" and "Caliban in the Coal Mines" showed "a fresh and lyrical sympathy with the modern world. . . . His vision" (thus *The Boston Transcript*) "is a social vision, his spirit a passionately energized command of the forces of justice." *Challenge* was succeeded by *These Times* (1917), an "interval" book which, lacking the unity of its predecessor, sought, though it did not attain, larger horizons. *The New Adam* (1920) is more of a unit: "a frank expression of the modern poet's conception of love, this new Adam, caught in the eternal struggle of the flesh, is the child of a complex and analytical age." Individually, the poems alternate with regularity between a few successes and many failures.

Roast Leviathan (1923) was considered by many the ripest and most varied of his volumes, especially by the English critics. Being too near to consider it dispassionately, the editor turns brazenly to the latter. "In *Roast Leviathan*," wrote *The Observer*, "Mr. Untermeyer's natural luxuriance and exuberance are never out of place; the reader can believe he is meeting the very Leviathan of Job and the psalmist." "The title-poem, with its lavish use of interior rhyme and assonance, has the intricate brilliance of an Oriental tapestry." Edwin Muir, the author of *Attitudes*, wrote in *The New Age*, "This volume shows real reasons for its author's fame. He has, indeed, more vigor than a dozen of poets who have a reputation equal to his. On every subject he treats, he gives opulent measure, an opulence within the reach of nobody in contemporary verse but himself."

Ungratefully enough, the author himself prefers *Burning Bush* (1928) and the lighter *Food and Drink* (1932) to any of the preceding volumes. Physically the smallest of his books, they are poetically the fullest; the key is quieter, the tone is surer. No longer dependent on muscular adjectives or heaven-storming epithets, they

seem to the author to present a fusion which his earlier poetry lacked, a fusion of outer and inner reality. As Herbert S. Gorman wrote, "Whereas in his other poetry the passion was free, on the surface, exuberant, running boisterously between earth and heaven, and (incidentally) sometimes tripping itself up, it is now like the dark current of blood flowing implacably through arteries that map white flesh. . . . The restraint and suggestion, the push of emotion that wholly impregnates but which is semi-obscured, the clear comprehension and unstressed technique, prove that he has realized his complete maturity in poetry."

The same year saw the publication of *Moses* (1928), miscalled a novel. Actually the work is a cross between an historical reconstruction and a phantasia. The Biblical narrative is followed in the main, but, enlarging upon hints in the Talmud and ancient Egyptian records, the author indulges in speculations and apocryphal tales in a prose that no factual historian would allow.

New Songs for New Voices (1928), in collaboration with David and Clara Mannes, is a collection of modern poems set for the first time to modern music, in which the editor made his public début as a not too serious composer. *Blue Rhine—Black Forest* (1930) is a day- and guide-book, where humor, unknown legends and explicit directions wind themselves through western Germany.

Four volumes of his critical satires appeared: *The Younger Quire* (1911), a tiny burlesque of an anthology (*The Younger Choir*) issued anonymously, of which only one hundred copies were printed; "*—And Other Poets*" (1917); *Including Horace* (1919), paraphrases of the Latin bard as various classic and modern poets might have rendered him; and *Heavens* (1922) in which the poet after gently mocking his contemporaries, bade farewell to the field of parody. The four were combined, with several new satires, in *Collected Parodies* (1926), which the author, with great self-restraint, refrained from calling "Parodies Lost."

As translator, he has published several volumes, of which the best known are *Poems of Heinrich Heine* (1917, revised edition, 1923) and *The Fat of the Cat* (1925), freely paraphrased from the Swiss stories of Gottfried Keller.

A book of essays, *The New Era in American Poetry* (1919), was amplified and made into a more balanced and comprehensive set of twenty subdivided chapters under the title *American Poetry Since 1900* (1923). The two critical anthologies, *Modern American Poetry* and *Modern British Poetry*, have been revised and enlarged several times since their original publication in 1919 and 1920 and are used as textbooks in the universities. A collection of modern poems for young people, was published in two editions:

This Singing World (1923) and *This Singing World for Younger Children* (1926). *Yesterday and Today* (1927), a "comparative anthology," contrasted the poetry of the present with that of the immediate past. These volumes were adopted in high schools and junior colleges, as was *The Forms of Poetry* (1926), a "pocket-dictionary of verse." *The Book of Living Verse* appeared in 1932.

Besides admitting himself the author of these too many volumes, Untermeyer was also one of the editors of *The Seven Arts* and *Paper Books*, itinerant lecturer at various universities, a fairly regular contributor to *The Saturday Review of Literature*. In 1928, he achieved his life-long desire, acquiring a farm, a trout-stream and half a mountain of sugar-maples in the Adirondacks.

CALIBAN IN THE COAL MINES

God, we don't like to complain;
  We know that the mine is no lark.
But—there's the pools from the rain;
  But—there's the cold and the dark.

God, You don't know what it is—
  You, in Your well-lighted sky—
Watching the meteors whizz;
  Warm, with a sun always by.

God, if You had but the moon
  Stuck in Your cap for a lamp,
Even You'd tire of it soon,
  Down in the dark and the damp.

Nothing but blackness above
  And nothing that moves but the cars. . . .
God, if You wish for our love,
  Fling us a handful of stars!

SWIMMERS

I took the crazy short-cut to the bay;
Over a fence or two and through a hedge,
Jumping a private road, along the edge
Of backyards full of drying wash it lay.
And now, the last set being played and over,
I hurried past the ruddy lakes of clover;

I swung my racket at astonished oaks,
My arm still tingling from aggressive strokes.
Tennis was over for the day—
I took the leaping short-cut to the bay.

Then the quick plunge into the cool, green dark,
The windy waters rushing past me, through me;
Filled with a sense of some heroic lark
Existing in a vigor clean and roomy.
Swiftly I rose to meet the cat-like sea
That sprang upon me with a hundred claws,
And grappled, pulled me down and played with me.
Then, held suspended in the tightening pause
When one wave grows into a toppling acre,
I dived headlong into the foremost breaker;
Pitting against a cold and turbulent strife,
The feverish intensity of life.
Out of the foam I lurched and rode the wave,
Swimming, hand over hand, against the wind;
I felt the sea's vain pounding, and I grinned
Knowing I was its master, not its slave. . . .

Back on the curving beach I stood again,
Facing the bath-house, when a group of men,
Stumbling beneath some sort of weight, went by.
I could not see the heavy thing they carried;
I only heard: "He never gave a cry—"
"Who's going to tell her?—" "Yes, and they just married—"
"Such a good swimmer, too" . . . And then they passed,
Leaving the silence throbbing and aghast.

A moment there my frightened heart hung slack,
And then the rich, retarded blood came back
Singing a livelier tune; and in my pulse
Beat the great wave that endlessly exults. . . .
Why I was there and whither I must go,
I did not care. Enough for me to know
The same persistent struggle and the glowing
Waste of all spendthrift hours, bravely showing
Life, an adventure hazardous and gay,
And death, a long and vivid holiday.

PRAYER

God, though this life is but a wraith,
  Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
  Give me the heart to fight—and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be,
  Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
  And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
  With beauty, and with wonder lit—
But let me always see the dirt,
  And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
  Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums—
But never let me dare forget
  The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half-done,
  Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride.
And when, at last, the fight is won,
  God, keep me still unsatisfied.

HANDS

Strange, how this smooth and supple joint can be
  Put to so many purposes. It checks
And rears the monsters of machinery
  And shapes the idle gallantries of sex.

Those hands that light the fuse and dig the trap,
  Fingers that spin the earth or plunge through shame—
And yours, that lie so lightly in your lap,
  Are only blood and dust, all are the same.

What mastery directs them through the world
  And gives these delicate bones so great a power?
You drop your head. You sleep. Your hands are curled
  Loosely, like some half-opened, perfumed flower.

An hour ago they burned in mine and sent
  Armies with banners charging through my veins.
Now they are cool and white; they rest content,
  Curved in a smile. The mystery remains.

THE ONE VOICE

This is your hour. Plum and freesia
  Wait till you speak for them as light
Grows sultry and a breath of Asia
  Sharpens the May-soft night.

Over the centuries of slaughter
  The breath moves, bearing fitfully,
Along a waste of bitter water
  Unsweetened by a tree,

The ageless cry of Jewish women
  Too steeped in suffering to be shrill,
Mixed with a song that fear and famine
  Tortured but could not kill.

Now the air turns. A dark wind tramples
  The singing dust until a voice
Calls on the stones of buried temples
  To answer and rejoice.

The music falters; hate in armor
  Beats black drums on a copper sky.
Death rides over the shaken murmur
  While its last echoes die. . . .

And still the one voice carries, stronger
  For all the suffering it endures.
It is a lost world's homeward hunger,
  And it is yours.

DOG AT NIGHT

At first he stirs uneasily in sleep
And, since the moon does not run off, unfolds
Protesting paws. Grumbling that he must keep
Both eyes awake, he whimpers; then he scolds

And, rising to his feet, demands to know
The stranger's business. "You who break the dark
With insolent light, who are you? Where do you go?"
But nothing answers his indignant bark.
The moon ignores him, walking on as though
Dogs never were. Stiffened to fury now,
His small hairs stand upright, his howls come fast,
And terrible to hear is the bow-wow
That tears the night. Stirred by this bugle-blast,
The farmer's bitch grows active; without pause
Summons her mastiff and the hound that lies
Three fields away to rally to the cause.
And the next county wakes. And miles beyond
Throats ring themselves and brassy lungs respond
With threats, entreaties, bellowings and cries,
Chasing the white intruder down the skies.

BY "STONY WATER"

Victim of words in crowns or tatters,
  Confused by every claim of speech,
I seek instruction from my betters
  Who have not anything to teach.

These rocks have never learned dissembling;
  No one has ever asked this hill
What keeps its whitened bones from crumbling,
  What girders prop its mounting will.

Held in the ripening heart of summer,
  Nothing is needed to translate
A bluejay's own haphazard grammar
  Only the wind can conjugate.

The pebbled water's leafy murmur
  Fondles its every syllable
Until the cool asides are warmer
  Than those the lips use for a spell.

And while the last vain word is lettered
  And the long-tortured phrase is caught,
The air is full of the unuttered,
  And speech is but an afterthought.

A GEORGIAN ANTHOLOGY

Never was landscape quite so clipped and callow
As this between these pale bucolic covers;
On these smooth lawns the water-color lovers
Stray through the copse where kine and crocus follow.
And elms—elms lonely, leaning, haunted, hollow—
Are packed with thrushes, wrens and wheeling plovers
As, over every sprig of thyme, there hovers
At least one curlew or nostalgic swallow.

Here, far beyond the reach of life or trams,
A world composed of ever-verdant vales
Is thick with adjectives and thrice-told tales,
Blackbirds and buttercups and gentle dams;
While, from the hawthorn, immemorial lambs
Keep moonlit trysts with deathless nightingales.

COUNTRY EVENING

This is the time when birds no longer cry
  Haphazardly and high,
Nor dot the rails nor punctuate the trees
  In swift apostrophes.
This is the time day hesitates, as though
  It almost feared to go,
And the great span that promised to remain
  Goes back into thin rain.
And, doubtful of itself, night throws one spark
  To blaze the trail of dark;
And earth gives off cool breaths, green-growing smells,
  And something else
That lingers between light and atmosphere;
  And the third star swings clear.
This is the hour for lamps; this is the time
  For the slow, homeward climb.

FOOD AND DRINK

Why has our poetry eschewed
The rapture and response of food?

What hymns are sung, what praises said
For home-made miracles of bread?
Since what we love has always found
Expression in enduring sound,
Music and verse should be competing
To match the transient joy of eating.
There should be present in our songs
As many tastes as there are tongues;
There should be humbly celebrated
One passion that is never sated.
Let us begin it with the first
Distinction of a conscious thirst
When the collusion of the vine
Uplifted water into wine.
Let us give thanks before we turn
To other things of less concern
For all the poetry of the table:
Clams that parade their silent fable;
Lobsters that have a rock for stable;
Red-faced tomatoes ample as
A countryman's full-bosomed lass;
Plain-spoken turnips; honest beets;
The carnal gusto of red meats;
Colorless, mint-completed lamb;
The wood-fire pungence of smoked ham;
Young veal that's smooth as natural silk;
The lavish motherliness of milk;
Parsley and lemon-butter that add
Spring sweetness unto river shad;
Thin flakes of halibut and cod,
Pickerel, flounder, snapper, scrod,
And every fish whose veins may be
Charged with the secrets of the sea;
Sweet-sour carp, beloved by Jews;
Pot-luck simplicity of stews;
Crabs, juiciest of Nature's jokes;
The deep reserve of artichokes;
Mushrooms, whose taste is texture, loath
To tell of their mysterious growth;
Quick, mealy comfort glowing in
A baked potato's crackled skin;

The morning promise, hailed by man,
Of bacon crisping in the pan;
The sage compound of *Hasenpfeffer*
With dumplings born of flour and zephyr;
Spinach whose spirit is the soil;
Anchovies glorified in oil;
The slow-gold nectar maples yield;
Pale honey tasting of the field
Where every clover is Hymettus;
The cooling sanity of lettuce
And every other herbal green
Whose touch is calm, whose heart is clean;
Assertive leek; rank chard; the dour
Extravagance of cauliflower;
Succulent bean-sprouts, bamboo-shoots;
The sapid catalogue of fruits:
Plebeian apple, caustic grape,
Quinces that have no gift for shape,
Dull plums that mind their own affairs,
Incurably bland and blunted pears,
Fantastic passion-fruit, frank lemons
With acid tongues as sharp as women's,
Exotic loquats, sly persimmons,
White currants, amber-fleshed sultanas,
(Miniature and sweetened mannas)
Expansive peaches, suave bananas,
Oranges ripening in crates,
Tight-bodied figs, sun-wrinkled dates,
Melons that have their own vagaries;
The bright astringency of berries;
Crêpe-satin luxury of cream;
Wedding-cake that fulfills the dream;
Pepper, whose satire stings and cuts;
Raw liberality of nuts;
Sauces of complex mysteries;
Proverbial parsnips; muscular cheese;
Innocent eggs that scorn disguises;
Languid molasses; burning spices
In kitchen-oracles to Isis;
Thick sauerkraut's fat-bellied savor;
Anything with a chocolate flavor;

Deep generosity of pies;
Hot puddings bursting to surprise
The smug monotony of rice;
Raisins that doze in cinnamon buns;
Kentucky biscuits, Scottish scones;
Falstaffian tarts that mock the chaste
Rose-elegance of almond-paste;
Venison steaks that smack of cloisters;
Goose-liver for the soul that roisters;
Reticent prawn; Lucullan oysters;
Sausages, fragrant link on link;
The vast ambrosias of drink:
Tea, that domestic mandarin;
Bucolic cider; loose-lipped gin;
Coffee, extract of common sense,
Purgative of the night's pretense;
Cocoa's prim nursery; the male
Companionship of crusty ale;
Cognac as oily as a ferret;
The faintly iron thrust of claret;
Episcopal port, aged and austere;
Rebellious must of grape; the clear,
Bluff confraternity of beer—

All these are good, all are a part
Of man's imperative needs that start
Not in the palate but the heart.
Thus fat and fiber, root and leaf
Become quick fuel and slow grief.
These, through the chemistry of blood,
Sustain his hungering manhood,
Fulfilling passion, ripening pain;
Steel in his bone, fire at his brain. . . .
So until man abjures the meats
Terrestrial and impermanent sweets,
Growing beyond the things he eats,
Let us be thankful for the good
Beauty and benison of food,
Let us join chiming vowel with vowel
To rhapsodize fish, flesh and fowl,
And let us thank God in our songs
There are as many tastes as tongues!

SCARCELY SPRING

Nothing is real. The world has lost its edges;
The sky, uncovered, is the one thing clear.
The earth is little more than atmosphere
Where yesterday were rocks and naked ridges.
Nothing is fixed. Tentative rain dislodges
Green upon green or lifts a coral spear
That breaks in blossom, and the hills appear
Too frail to be the stony fruit of ages.

Nothing will keep. Even the heavens waver.
Young larks, whose first thought is to cry aloud,
Have spent their bubble notes. And here or there
A few slow-hearted boys and girls discover
A moon as unsubstantial as a cloud
Painted by air on washed and watery air.

THE DARK CHAMBER

The brain forgets, but the blood will remember.
There, when the play of sense is over,
The last, low spark in the darkest chamber
Will hold all there is of love and lover.

The war of words, the life-long quarrel
Of self against self will resolve into nothing;
Less than the chain of berry-red coral
Crying against the dead black of her clothing.

What has the brain that it hopes to last longer?
The blood will take from forgotten violence,
The groping, the break of her voice in anger.
There will be left only color and silence.

These will remain, these will go searching
Your veins for life when the flame of life smolders:
The night that you two saw the mountains marching
Up against dawn with the stars on their shoulders—

The jetting poplars' arrested fountains
As you drew her under them, easing her pain—
The notes, not the words, of a half-finished sentence—
The music, the silence. . . . These will remain.

LONG FEUD

Where, without bloodshed, can there be
A more relentless enmity
Than the long feud fought silently

Between man and the growing grass.
Man's the aggressor, for he has
Weapons to humble and harass

The impudent spears that charge upon
His sacred privacy of lawn.
He mows them down, and they are gone

Only to lie in wait, although
He builds above and digs below
Where never a root would dare to go.

His are the triumphs till the day
There's no more grass to cut away
And, weary of labor, weary of play,

Having exhausted every whim,
He stretches out each conquering limb.
And then the small grass covers him.

JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

Jean Starr was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 13, 1886, and educated at the Putnam Seminary in the city of her birth. At sixteen she came to New York City, pursuing special studies at Columbia. In 1907 she married Louis Untermeyer and, although she had written some prose previous to the poetic renascence, her first volume was published more than ten years later.

Growing Pains (1918) is a thin book of thirty-four poems, the result of eight years' slow and critical creation. This highly selective process did much to bring the volume up to an unusual level; a severity of taste and standards maintain the poet on her austere

plane. Perfection is always a passion with her; the first poem in the book ("Clay Hills") declares it with almost intolerant definiteness.

Acutely self-analytical, there is a stern, uncompromising relentlessness toward her introspections that keeps them from being wistful or pathetic. These poems are, as she explains in her title-poem—

> No songs for an idle lute,
> No pretty tunes of coddled ills,
> But the bare chart of my growing pains.

Intellect is always in the ascendancy, even in the most ecstatic verses. In a curiously religious poem, "A Man" (dedicated to her father), she pictures herself as a child, and expresses the whole psychology of juvenile love of poor literature in such a phrase as:

> A book held gaping on my knees,
> Watering a sterile romance with my thoughts.

But it is not only her search for truth and a keen ear for the exact word that make these poems distinctive. A sharp color sense, a surprising whimsicality, a translation of the ordinary in terms of the unexplored illumine such poems as "Sinfonia Domestica," "Clothes," and the much-quoted "Autumn." In the last named, with its brilliant combination of painting and housewifery, Mrs. Untermeyer has reproduced her early environment with bright pungency; "Verhaeren's Flemish *genre* pictures are no better," writes Amy Lowell. Several of her purely pictorial poems establish a swift kinship between the most romantic and most prosaic objects. The tiny "Moonrise" is an example: so is "High Tide," that, in one extended metaphor, turns the mere fact of a physical law into an arresting fancy. As "Autumn" is a celebration of domesticity, an almost exalted paean of housekeeping, so most of this poet's work embodies an essentially feminine, or, one might better say, womanly attitude to life.

Dreams Out of Darkness (1921) is a ripening of this author's power with a richer musical undercurrent. An increase of melody is manifest on every page, possibly most striking in "Lake Song," which, beneath its symbolism, is one of the few notable unrhymed lyrics of the period. The form of this poetry is, as Joseph Freeman has written, "distinguished not only by the clear qualities of chiseled marble, not only by a music so melodious that some of her free verse pieces have to be read two or three times before their lack of rhyme becomes noticeable, but also by its intellectual fluidity. She has mastered her emotions without deadening them." And Amy Lowell, amplifying this theme, concludes, "After all,

beautiful as Mrs. Untermeyer's forms often are, it is her thoughts that make the book. This is the very heart of a woman, naked and serious, beautiful and unashamed."

Her training as a musician (she made her début as a *Liedersinger* in Vienna and London in 1924) added to her equipment as translator of the "official" life of *Franz Schubert* by Oscar Bie in 1928.

Steep Ascent (1927) marks this poet's spiritual as well as poetic climax. The dominant note, as might have been foreseen, is ethical, but there is no reliance on mere religiosity. Hers is a spirit that rejects the facile both in phrase and sentiment, a spirit whose essential quality other poets were quick to recognize. "Here," wrote Mary Sinton Leitch in the *Norfolk Virginian,* "is no sorrow feigned for purposes of art, sorrow that gazes on itself to see what expression of despair best becomes it. Here is ruggedness of scarred, enduring granite and sincerity hardly to be surpassed." "We are aware," said Joseph Auslander in the *New York Sun,* "of her patterns only in that they tighten the intensity of her utterance and deepen the somber and exalted colors. . . . The book literally takes fire, not as a conflagration but rather as a holy torch." Her technique was thus summarized by Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic:* "What is most remarkable about Jean Starr Untermeyer is the peculiar shading and force of her style. I believe that hers is classically Hebraic. She has always seemed to me one of the few writers who have successfully preserved in a modern language something of the authentic austerity of Jewish literature. . . . The strength and interest of her poetry derive from the survival in it of those fierce and austere habits of thinking and feeling."

The poems written subsequently to *Steep Ascent*—four of which are reprinted in these pages—have a new serenity, even a sly humor; they do not proceed, as did many of the others, from struggle, but from assurance. The pitch is lower but no less vibrant; the note of rigorous austerity is resolved into one of peace and tenderness.

HIGH TIDE

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang with rough joy on the shrinking sand.
Sprang—but were drawn back slowly
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

AUTUMN

(To My Mother)

How memory cuts away the years,
And how clean the picture comes
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;
Charged with keen sunshine.
And you, stirred with activity,
The spirit of those energetic days.

There was our back-yard,
So plain and stripped of green,
With even the weeds carefully pulled away
From the crooked red bricks that made the walk,
And the earth on either side so black.

Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.
I shall not forget them:—
Great jars pompous with the raw green of pickles,
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,
Exhaling the pungent dill;
And in the very center of the yard,
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,
Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.
And there were bland banks of cabbages that came by the wagon-load,
Soon to be cut into delicate ribbons
Only to be crushed by the heavy, wooden stompers.
Such feathery whiteness—to come to kraut!
And after, there were grapes that hid their brightness under a gray dust,

Then gushed thrilling, purple blood over the fire;
And enameled crab-apples that tricked with their fragrance
But were bitter to taste.
And there were spicy plums and ill-shaped quinces,
And long string beans floating in pans of clear water
Like slim, green fishes.
And there was fish itself,
Salted, silver herring from the city. . . .

And you moved among these mysteries,
Absorbed and smiling and sure;
Stirring, tasting, measuring,
With the precision of a ritual.
I like to think of you in your years of power—
You, now so shaken and so powerless—
High priestess of your home.

CLAY HILLS

It is easy to mold the yielding clay.
And many shapes grow into beauty
Under the facile hand.
But forms of clay are lightly broken;
They will lie shattered and forgotten in a dingy corner.

Yet underneath the slipping clay
Is rock . . .
I would rather work in stubborn rock
All the years of my life,
And make one strong thing
And set it in a high, clean place,
To recall the granite strength of my desire.

SINFONIA DOMESTICA

When the white wave of a glory that is hardly I
  Breaks through my mind and washes it clean,
I know at last the meaning of my ecstasy,
  And know at last my wish and what it can mean.

To have sped out of life that night—to have vanished
Not as a vision, but as something touched, yet grown
Radiant as the moonlight, circling my naked shoulder;
Wrapped in a dream of beauty, longed for, but never known.

For how with our daily converse, even the sweet sharing
Of thoughts, of food, of home, of common life,
How shall I be that glory, that last desire
For which men struggle? Is Romance in a wife?

Must I bend a heart that is bowed to breaking
With a frustration, inevitable and slow,
And bank my flame to a low hearth fire, believing
You will come for warmth and life to its tempered glow?

Shall I mold my hope anew, to one of service,
And tell my uneasy soul, "Behold, this is good"?
And meet you (if we do meet), even at Heaven's threshold,
With ewer and basin, with clothing and with food?

LAKE SONG

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The weeping of ancient women
Who grieved without rebellion.

The lake falls over the shore
Like tears on their curven bosoms.
Here is languid, luxurious wailing;
The wailing of kings' daughters.

So do we ever cry,
A soft, unmutinous crying,
When we know ourselves each a princess
Locked fast within her tower.

The lapping of lake water
Is like the weeping of women,
The fertile tears of women
That water the dreams of men.

BIRTHDAY

Now the beautiful business of summer is over,
Earth wraps herself in a bright, leaf-patterned shawl.
The hives cement the prodigal juice of the clover
And spendthrift gold is hoarded in bin and stall.
Beyond the wind-crisped hedge the cornstalks hover;
The pumpkin lies by the wall.

October's the heir of the year, and you, my lover,
October's darling, the first to come at her call,
May claim and hold what your wandering eyes discover
On jeweled hills that tempt a reluctant fall;
Blest by the fired earth, while skies above her
Spill golden peace over all.

COUNTRY OF NO LACK

A lilac ribbon is unbound,
A band of gradual rose untied,
And lo, the glowing book of day
Is opened on the mountainside.

What curves salute, what colors sound
From this so-rich-illumined scroll,
For whose perusal one need pay
Only a just delight as toll.

The brook's clean silver set in stones
Is balanced by the silver sheen
Of clean-stripped logs, which in a field
Seem floating down a river of green.

Furze are not flowers, but the tones
Of sunlight that a bird has sung,
And broken purples but the yield
Of hoarded twilights, meadow-flung.

Against a heaven's faithful blue,
A fadeless forest lifts its pines,
From shadows deepening into black
A slim and shadowy road inclines.

Upon the printed air, how true
Stand lizard, lake and leaf, page-still.
Here in the country of no lack,
What care can move, what grief can chill?

MOMENTARY DANIEL

Down, down, hot beast,
Not by whip but by word.
I shall not be your feast.
No, not by the Lord!

The armoring Lord
That stayed Daniel,
While the lion roared,
While the lion fell.

See, without scars,
He is quelled by a shout.
. . . .

Quick, open the bars
And let me out!

STONY WATER[1]

(Words with a Deed)

Here many suns, and many a sky, deep-overcast and dark,
Seasons more blind to follow than the sheep they breed,
Snow a bright angel through the valley, whitening the bark,
And Spring, forever breathless, wrought this country to your need.

A love that fathered me, and through a line too intricate to trace
Wove into pattern hillside, brook and grace to give,
Abides, with its own luminous life, stone-rooted in this place;
And from my hand to yours, my heart to yours, says "Live."

Live here. Breathe deeply on these hills. I deed them yours.
But know a country, unsurveyed, more fruitful to your touch,
Weathered of every blast, only by hope of sun endures,
And under what seems stone, untainted springs that yield so much.

[1] See poem on the same theme on page 445.

DEW ON A DUSTY HEART

If come into this world again I must
And take unto myself another form,
Oh, let it be unblemished by a mist
Of imperfections or the line infirm.
And let it shapen to a secret wish
Untouched, untinctured, even by a dram
Of earthiness; nor let the fretted wash
Of passion fray the fine-immaculate dream.

Oh, let me come back as a melody
New as the air it takes, no taint of ill
To halt such lovely flying as birds do
Going from infinite nought to infinite all.
Giving to dusty hearts that lag at even
The dewy rest they dream of and call heaven.

ONE KIND OF HUMILITY

Shall we say heaven is not heaven
Since golden stairs are rugged and uneven?

Or that no light illuminates a star
That swings in other regions than we are?

Deny with soured breath enduring God
Because we cling so rankly to the sod?

No. Cleanse with weeping, fasting and with prayer.
Praise God. Look starward. Mount the stair!

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

John Gould Fletcher was born at Little Rock, Arkansas, January 3, 1886. He was educated at Phillips Academy and Harvard (1903-7) and, after spending several years in Massachusetts, moved to England, where, except for brief visits to the United States, he has lived ever since.

In 1913 Fletcher published five books of poems which he has referred to as "his literary wild oats," five small collections of experimental and faintly interesting verse. In 1914, shortly after

the publication of his *Fire and Wine* (one of the early quintet), Fletcher joined the Imagists. With H. D. and Amy Lowell he became one of the leaders of this interesting movement and his contributions were among the outstanding features of the three anthologies which furnish so illuminating a record of the esthetics of the period. Coincident with the first appearance of *Some Imagist Poets,* Fletcher discarded his previous style and emerged as a decidedly less conservative and far more arresting poet with *Irradiations—Sand and Spray* (1915). This volume is full of an extraordinary fancy; imagination riots through it, though it is sometimes a bloodless and bodiless imagination. It is crowded—even overcrowded—with shifting subtleties; a brilliant, haphazard series of improvisations.

In the following book, *Goblins and Pagodas* (1916), Fletcher carries his unrelated harmonies much further. Color dominates him; the ambitious set of eleven "color symphonies" is an elaborate design in which tone and thought are summoned by color-associations, sometimes closely related, sometimes far-fetched. "It contains," says Conrad Aiken in his appreciative chapter on Fletcher in *Scepticisms,* "little of the emotion which relates to the daily life of men and women. . . . It is a sort of absolute poetry, a poetry of detached waver and brilliance, a beautiful flowering of language alone—a parthenogenesis, as if language were fertilized by itself rather than by thought or feeling. Remove the magic of phrase and sound and there is nothing left: no thread of continuity, no thought, no story, no emotion. But the magic of phrase and sound is powerful, and it takes one into a fantastic world."

In 1917 Fletcher again began to change in spirit as well as style. Emotion declared itself with surprising candor. After having appeared in the three Imagist anthologies, he sought for depths rather than surfaces; his "Lincoln" accomplished a closer relation to humanity. A moving mysticism speaks from *The Tree of Life* (1918); the more obviously native *Granite and Breakers* (1921) and *Parables* (1925) contain a prophetic note new to this poet. Though less arresting than the ones by which he is best known, the later poems reach depths which the preceding verses never attained. Although the unconscious often dictates Fletcher's fantasies, a calm music dominates them. A grave, subdued lyricism moves through *The Black Rock* (1928) and *Branches of Adam* (1926), in which the philosophy is akin to Nietzsche's while the motto might well be Blake's "How is it we have walked through fire, and yet are not consumed?" Never a popular poet, Fletcher gains—and suffers—from his original and fluctuating power. He is the poet held in a state of flux.

Besides his quality as poet Fletcher ranks high as a translator

from the French, having made the English versions of *The Dance over Fire and Water* (by Elie Faure) in 1926 and *The Reveries of a Solitary* (by J. J. Rousseau) in 1927. *The Two Frontiers* (1930) is a highly speculative but highly serious consideration—a sort of prophetic historical essay—regarding the parallels and contrasts of America and Russia.

FROM "IRRADIATIONS"

I

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades,
Glint of the glittering wings of dragon-flies in the light:
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards,
Rippling, quivering flutters, repulse and surrender,
The sun broidered upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds;
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

II

Flickering of incessant rain
On flashing pavements:
Sudden scurry of umbrellas:
Bending, recurved blossoms of the storm.

The winds come clanging and clattering
From long white highroads whipping in ribbons up summits:
They strew upon the city gusty wafts of apple-blossom,
And the rustling of innumerable translucent leaves.

Uneven tinkling, the lazy rain
Dripping from the eaves.

III

The trees, like great jade elephants,
Chained, stamp and shake 'neath the gadflies of the breeze;
The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:
The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies,
The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah.
Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

IV

O seeded grass, you army of little men
Crawling up the long slope with quivering, quick blades of steel:
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of Earth,
Interlace yourselves tightly over my heart,
And do not let me go:
For I would lie here forever and watch with one eye
The pilgrimaging ants in your dull, savage jungles,
The while with the other I see the stiff lines of the slope
Break in mid-air, a wave surprisingly arrested,—
And above them, wavering, dancing, bodiless, colorless, unreal,
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.

V

The morning is clean and blue and the wind blows up the clouds:
Now my thoughts gathered from afar
Once again in their patched armor, with rusty plumes and blunted swords,
Move out to war.

Smoking our morning pipes we shall ride two and two
Through the woods,
For our old cause keeps us together,
And our hatred is so precious not death or defeat can break it.

God willing, we shall this day meet that old enemy
Who has given us so many a good beating.
Thank God we have a cause worth fighting for,
And a cause worth losing and a good song to sing.

GREEN SYMPHONY

I

The glittering leaves of the rhododendrons
Balance and vibrate in the cool air;
While in the sky above them
White clouds chase each other.

Like scampering rabbits,
Flashes of sunlight sweep the lawn;
They fling in passing
Patterns of shadow,
Golden and green.

With long cascades of laughter,
The mating birds dart and swoop to the turf:
'Mid their mad trillings
Glints the gay sun behind the trees.

Down there are deep blue lakes:
Orange blossom droops in the water.
In the tower of the winds
All the bells are set adrift:
Jingling
For the dawn.

Thin fluttering streamers
Of breeze lash through the swaying boughs,
Palely expectant
The earth receives the slanting rain.

The glittering leaves of the rhododendron
Are shaken like blue-green blades of grass,
Flickering, cracking, falling:
Splintering in a million fragments.

The wind runs laughing up the slope
Stripping off handfuls of wet green leaves,
To fling in people's faces.
Wallowing on the daisy-powdered turf,
Clutching at the sunlight,
Cavorting in the shadow.

Like baroque pearls,
Like cloudy emeralds,
The clouds and the trees clash together;
Whirling and swirling,
In the tumult
Of the spring,
And the wind.

II

The trees splash the sky with their fingers,
A restless green rout of stars.

With whirling movement
They swing their boughs
About their stems:
Planes on planes of light and shadow
Pass among them,
Opening fanlike to fall.

The trees are like a sea;
Tossing;
Trembling,
Roaring,
Wallowing,
Darting their long green flickering fronds up at the sky.
Spotted with white blossom-spray.

The trees are roofs:
Hollow caverns of cool blue shadow,
Solemn arches
In the afternoons.
The whole vast horizon
In terrace beyond terrace,
Pinnacle above pinnacle,
Lifts to the sky
Serrated ranks of green on green.

They caress the roofs with their fingers,
They sprawl about the river to look into it;
Up the hill they come
Gesticulating challenge:
They cower together

In dark valleys;
They yearn out over the fields.

Enameled domes
Tumble upon the grass,
Crashing in ruin,
Quiet at last

The trees lash the sky with their leaves,
Uneasily shaking their dark green manes.

III

Far let the voices of the mad wild birds be calling me,
I will abide in this forest of pines.

When the wind blows
Battling through the forest,
I hear it distantly,
The crash of a perpetual sea.

When the rain falls,
I watch the silver spears slanting downwards
From pale river-pools of sky,
Enclosed in dark fronds.

When the sun shines,
I weave together distant branches till they enclose mighty circles,
I sway to the movement of hooded summits,
I swim leisurely in deep blue seas of air.

I hug the smooth bark of stately red pillars
And with cones carefully scattered
I mark the progression of dark dial-shadows
Flung diagonally downwards through the afternoon.

This turf is not like turf:
It is a smooth dry carpet of velvet,
Embroidered with brown patterns of needles and cones.
These trees are not like trees:
They are innumerable feathery pagoda-umbrellas,

Stiffly ungracious to the wind,
Teetering on red-lacquered stems.

In the evening I listen to the winds' lisping,
While the conflagrations of the sunset flicker and clash behind me,
Flamboyant crenellations of glory amid the charred ebony boles.

In the night the fiery nightingales
Shall clash and trill through the silence:
Like the voices of mermaids crying
From the sea.

Long ago has the moon whelmed this uncompleted temple.
Stars swim like gold fish far above the black arches.

Far let the timid feet of dawn fly to catch me:
I will abide in this forest of pines:
For I have unveiled naked beauty,
And the things that she whispered to me in the darkness,
Are buried deep in my heart.

Now let the black tops of the pine-trees break like a spent wave,
Against the gray sky:
These are tombs and temples and altars sun-kindled for me.

LONDON NIGHTFALL

I saw the shapes that stood upon the clouds:
And they were tiger-breasted, shot with light,
And all of them, lifting long trumpets together,
Blew over the city, for the night to come.
Down in the street, we floundered in the mud;
Above, in endless files, gold angels came
And stood upon the clouds, and blew their horns
For night.

Like a wet petal crumpled,
Twilight fell soddenly on the weary city;
The 'buses lurched and groaned,
The shops put up their doors.

But skywards, far aloft,
The angels, vanishing, waved broad plumes of gold,
Summoning spirits from a thousand hills
To pour the thick night out upon the earth.

THE SKATERS

Black swallows swooping or gliding
In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
The skaters skim over the frozen river.
And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge upon the surface,
Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver.

LINCOLN[1]

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

Ungainly, laboring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold every one safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards into the earth

[1] See pages 105, 163, 189, 333, 334, 349, 354.

Towards old things;
Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke with God,
Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what, and found their goal at last;
Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat;
Down to the granite of patience
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing, seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it
The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is silence abroad in the land today,
And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.
Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence
Like laboring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude clay-fields:
"I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring,
But there were also many things which I left behind.

"Tombs that were quiet;
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.

"Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence,

Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sunsetting,
No victory but to Him who has given all."

IV

The clamor of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the battle is silent.
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on afresh its bright colors.
But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and crossing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.
Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes—stripes red for the pain that he bore for you—
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to your law.

Strew over him flowers:
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower;

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet,
And beside it there lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

A REBEL

Tie a bandage over his eyes,
And at his feet
Let rifles drearily patter
Their death-prayers of defeat.

Throw a blanket over his body,
It need no longer stir;
Truth will but stand the stronger
For all who died for her.

Now he has broken through
To his own secret place;
Which, if we dared to do,
We would have no power left to look on that dead face.

BEFORE OLYMPUS

Across the sky run streaks of white light, aching;
Across the earth the chattering grass is sprawling;
Across the sea roll troubled gleams awaking,
Across the steeps dark broken shapes are crawling.

We have been scourged with youth, a rod in pickle
To cut the hide from our own hearts. We know
The tree of life is also cursed. We heed
The silent laughter of gray gods of time.

We do not seek the lithe and brittle music
Of swords and flame. We have no more desire
For glory or contempt. The moment flies
Past us, and shouting carries its echo on.

The clank of wheels and pumps, the screech of levers
No longer now afflicts our inmost bearing;
The old wise nightingales have longer ears,
They sing the blooming of wild immortelles.

And through the desolation of great cities
As in a madhouse we go peering where
Black butterflies flit about a carcass. Words
Gallop about the sky. The earth broods like a stone.

Heaven is a blank news-sheet fixed and trembling
Between the knees of God. The grass runs crawling.
The waves of the sea their laughter are dissembling,
But who will reap them when our scythes are falling?

ADVENT

I have no more gold;
I spent it all on foolish songs.
Gold I cannot give to you.

Incense, too, I burned
To the great idols of this world;
I must come with empty hands.

Myrrh I lost
In that darker sepulcher
Where another Christ
Died for man in vain.—

I can only give myself,
I have nothing left but this.
Naked I wait, naked I fall
Into Your Hands, Your Hands.

THE BIRTH OF LUCIFER

Helpless is God in struggling with that star
  Which in derision makes His light less dim;
The evening bids the morning from afar
  To rise and conquer Him;

After nine hours of night the sun, expiring
  Breaks the dark vessel that it fills; and then
Erect against the noon it stands, desiring
  This transience, making us both Gods and men:

Life seeks again its dark and secret places,
Where under the sunset's leveled sword, it keeps
Its rest until rekindled in new faces,
Old worlds awake from their too dreamless sleep.

A NEW HEAVEN

We have our hopes and fears that flout us,
We have our illusions, changeless through the years;
We have our dreams of rest after long struggle,
After our toil is finished, folded hands.
But for those who have fallen in battle,
What Heaven can there be?

Heaven is full of those who can remember
The ebbing-out of life that slowly lingered
At the dark doors of pain;
Heaven is full of those who dropped their burden
At last through weariness;
But these the War has taken
Remember naught but their own exultant youth
Filling their hearts with unaccomplished dreams:
The trumpet-call—then the swift searing darkness
Stilling the proud sad song.

How will these enter in
Our old dull Heaven?
Where we seek only to drowse at ease, unthinking,
Since we are safe at last.
Safe? For these souls who faced a thousand dangers,
And found sly Death that robbed them of their chance,
Ere it befell?
Safe—can a Heaven which is safe and painless,
Ever be Heaven to them?

Somewhere amid the clouds there is the home of thunder;
Thunder is naught to them,
It is a ball, a heavy plaything
They may kick hither and thither with their feet.
Lightning is but a toy—the flaming stars
Are endless camp-fire lights;
And for the silence of eternity,
They too on out-post duty, often heard it speak.

We have the dreams of our fat lives that lead us
To waste our lives;
We have the false hope we are serving others
When it is but ourselves we serve;
Yet these who have never lived, and whose sole service
Was but to die too soon,
Perhaps somewhere are making a new Heaven
Filled with the divine despair and joy this dead earth never
knew.

H. D.

Hilda Doolittle was born September 10, 1886, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. When she was still a child, her father became Director of the Flower Observatory and the family moved to a suburb in the outskirts of Philadelphia. Hilda Doolittle attended a private school in West Philadelphia; entered Bryn Mawr College in 1904; and went abroad, for what was intended to be a short sojourn, in 1911. After a visit to Italy and France she came to London, joining Ezra Pound and helping to organize the Imagists. Her work (signed "H. D.") began to appear in a few magazines and its unusual quality was recognized at once. Remaining for a while in London, she became one of the leaders of the movement (see Preface), creating through a chiseled verse her flawless evocations of Greek poetry and sculpture. In 1920 she made a long-deferred visit to America, settling on the Californian coast, returning the following year to England. Since 1921 H. D. has lived in a small town in Switzerland on the shore of Lake Geneva.

Her first collection, *Sea Garden*, appeared in 1916; an interval of five years elapsed before the publication of her second volume, *Hymen*, which was printed simultaneously in England and America in 1921.

H. D. was, by all odds, the most important of her group. She was the only one who steadfastly held to the letter as well as the spirit of its *credo*. She was in fact, the only true Imagist. Her poems, capturing the firm delicacy of the Greek models, are like a set of Tanagra figurines. Here, at first glance, the effect is chilling—beauty seems held in a frozen gesture. But it is in this very fixation of light, color and emotion that she achieves intensity. What at first seemed static becomes fluent; the arrested moment glows with a quivering tension.

Observe the poem entitled "Heat." Here, in the fewest possible words, is something beyond the description of heat—here is the effect of it. In these lines one feels the weight and solidity of a

midsummer afternoon. So in "The Islands" a propulsion of feeling hurries forward the syllables balancing on light and dark vowels, and what might have been only a list of antique names becomes an outcry.

Her efforts to draw the contemporary world are less happy. She is best in her reflections of clear-cut loveliness in a quietly pagan world; in most of her moods, she seems less a contemporary than an inspired anachronism.

Heliodora and Other Poems appeared in 1924. So much had already been written concerning the form of H. D.'s poetry that it was no longer necessary to expatiate on the unique features of her metric. Even those least impressed by the program of the Imagists readily conceded her exquisite if oversubtle flavor, the stripped purity of her line, the precision of her epithets. But the most apparent feature of *Heliodora*—even more noticeable than its beauties of form—is its intensity. A freely declared passion radiates from lines which are at once ecstatic and austere. Even the most casual reading must convince one that this poet is not, as she first seemed to us, a Greek statue faintly flushed with life, a delightful but detached relic of another world. This is a woman responsive to color and pain, aroused by loveliness, shocked by betrayal, affected by all those manifestations which are too old to be timely, too fresh to be ancient.

Practically all of H. D.'s previous volumes were assembled in *Collected Poems* (1925) which contains not only her original work but the spirited translations from the Odyssey and her flexible expansions of fragmentary phrases of Sappho. A play, *Hippolytus Temporizes*, appeared in 1927. In the later works it is interesting to trace the tightening of form, the approximation of more regular structure, even the introduction of half-candid, half-concealed rhyme.

H. D.'s prose is somewhat more derivative, bearing faint overtones of Gertrude Stein, but it rises above its influences. *Palimpsest* (1926) and *Hedylus* (1928) embody a poet's prose, the former embedding a triptych of interrelated tragedies, actual and intuitive.

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted.
O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;
no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;

O white pear,
your flower-tufts,
thick on the branch,
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut through the heat—
plow through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

ORCHARD

I saw the first pear
as it fell—

the honey-seeking, golden-banded,
the yellow swarm,
was not more fleet than I,
(spare us from loveliness!)
and I fell prostrate,
crying:
you have flayed us with your blossoms,
spare us the beauty
of fruit-trees!

The honey-seeking
paused not;
the air thundered their song,
and I alone was prostrate.

O rough-hewn
god of the orchard,
I bring you an offering—
do you, alone unbeautiful,
son of the god,
spare us from loveliness:

these fallen hazel-nuts,
stripped late of their green sheaths,
grapes, red-purple,
their berries
dripping with wine;
pomegranates already broken,
and shrunken figs,
and quinces untouched,
I bring you as offering.

SONG

You are as gold
as the half-ripe grain
that merges to gold again,
as white as the white rain
that beats through
the half-opened flowers
of the great flower tufts

thick on the black limbs
of an Illyrian apple bough.

Can honey distill such fragrance
as your bright hair—
for your face is as fair as rain;
yet as rain that lies clear
on white honey-comb
lends radiance to the white wax,
so your hair on your brow
casts light for a shadow.

FROM "LET ZEUS RECORD"

Stars wheel in purple, yours is not so rare
as Hesperus, nor yet so great a star
as bright Aldebaran or Sirius,
nor yet the stained and brilliant one of War;

stars turn in purple, glorious to the sight;
yours is not gracious as the Pleiads are,
nor as Orion's sapphires, luminous;

yet disenchanted, cold, imperious face,
when all the others, blighted, reel and fall,
your star, steel-set, keeps lone and frigid tryst
to freighted ships baffled in wind and blast.

LAIS

Let her who walks in Paphos
take the glass,
let Paphos take the mirror
and the work of frosted fruit,
gold apples set
with silver apple-leaf,
white leaf of silver
wrought with vein of gilt.

Let Paphos lift the mirror;
let her look
into the polished center of the disk,

Let Paphos take the mirror:
did she press
flowerlet of flame-flower
to the lustrous white
of the white forehead?
Did the dark veins beat
a deeper purple
than the wine-deep tint
of the dark flower?

Did she deck black hair,
one evening, with the winter-white
flower of the winter-berry?
Did she look (reft of her lover)
at a face gone white
under the chaplet
of white virgin-breath?

Lais, exultant, tyrannizing Greece,
Lais who kept her lovers in the porch,
lover on lover waiting
(but to creep
where the robe brushed the threshold
where still sleeps Lais),
so she creeps, Lais,
to lay her mirror at the feet
of her who reigns in Paphos.

Lais has left her mirror,
for she sees no longer in its depth
the Lais' self
that laughed exultant,
tyrannizing Greece.

Lais has left her mirror,
for she weeps no longer,
finding in its depth
a face, but other
than dark flame and white
feature of perfect marble.

Lais has left her mirror
(so one wrote)
to her who reigns in Paphos;
Lais who laughed a tyrant over Greece,
Lais who turned the lovers from the porch,
that swarm for whom now
Lais has no use;
Lais is now no lover of the glass,
seeing no more the face as once it was,
wishing to see that face and finding this.

FROM "HALCYON"

("*Bird—loved of sea-men*")

I

I'm not here,
everything's vague, blurred everywhere,
then you are blown
into a room;

the sea comes where a carpet
laid red and purple,
and where the edge showed marble
there is sea-weed;

sedge breaks the wall
where the couch stands,
the hands of strange people.
twisting tassel and fringe

of rich cloth, become clear;
I understand the people,
they aren't hateful but dear;
over all

a shrill wind, clear sky;
O why, why, why
am I fretful, insecure,
why am I vague, unsure

until you are blown,
unexpected, small, quaint, unnoticeable,
a gray gull
into a room.

SONGS FROM CYPRUS

I

Gather for festival
bright weed and purple shell;
make on the holy sand
pattern as one might make
who tread with rose-red heel
a measure
pleasureful;

such as those songs we made
in rose and myrtle shade
where rose and myrtle fell
(shell-petal or rose-shell)
on just such holy sand;
ah, the song
musical;

give me white rose and red;
find me in citron glade
citron of precious weight,
spread gold before her feet,
ah, weave the citron flower;
hail goddess
beautiful.

II

Where is the nightingale,
in what myrrh-wood and dim?
ah, let the night come black,
for we would conjure back
all that enchanted him,
all that enchanted him.

Where is the bird of fire?
in what packed hedge of rose?
in what roofed ledge of flower?
no other creature knows
what magic lurks within,
what magic lurks within.

Bird, bird, bird, bird, we cry,
hear, pity us in pain;
hearts break in the sunlight,
hearts break in daylight rain,
only night heals again,
only night heals again.

HOLY SATYR

Most holy Satyr,
like a goat,
with horns and hooves
to match thy coat
of russet brown,
I make leaf-circlets
and a crown of honey-flowers
for thy throat;
where the amber petals
drip to ivory,
I cut and slip
each stiffened petal
in the rift
of carven petal;
honey horn
has wed the bright
virgin petal of the white
flower cluster: lip to lip
let them whisper,
let them lilt, quivering.

Most holy Satyr,
like a goat,
hear this our song,
accept our leaves,

love-offering,
return our hymn,
like echo fling
a sweet song,
answering note for note.

THE ISLANDS

I

What are the islands to me,
what is Greece,
what is Rhodes, Samos, Chios,
what is Paros facing west,
what is Crete?

What is Samothrace,
rising like a ship,
what is Imbros rending the storm-waves
with its breast?

What is Naxos, Paros, Milos,
what the circle about Lycia,
what the Cyclades'
white necklace?

What is Greece—
Sparta, rising like a rock,
Thebes, Athens,
what is Corinth?

What is Euboia
with its island violets,
what is Euboia, spread with grass,
set with swift shoals,
what is Crete?

What are the islands to me,
what is Greece?

II

What can love of land give to me
that you have not—
what do the tall Spartans know,
and gentler Attic folk?

What has Sparta and her women
more than this?

What are the islands to me
if you are lost—
what is Naxos, Tinos, Andros,
and Delos, the clasp
of the white necklace?

III

What can love of land give to me
that you have not,
what can love of strife break in me
that you have not?

Though Sparta enter Athens,
Thebes wrack Sparta,
each changes as water,
salt, rising to wreak terror
and falling back.

IV

"What has love of land given to you
that I have not?"

I have questioned Tyrians
where they sat
on the black ships,
weighted with rich stuffs;
I have asked the Greeks
from the white ships,
and Greeks from ships whose hulks
lay on the wet sand, scarlet
with great beaks.

I have asked bright Tyrians
and tall Greeks—
"what has love of land given you?"
And they answered—"peace."

V

But Beauty is set apart,
beauty is cast by the sea,
a barren rock,
beauty is set about
with wrecks of ships,
upon our coast, death keeps
the shallows—death waits
clutching toward us
from the deeps.

Beauty is set apart;
the winds that slash its beach,
swirl the coarse sand
upward toward the rocks.

Beauty is set apart
from the islands
and from Greece.

VI

In my garden
the winds have beaten
the ripe lilies;
in my garden, the salt
has wilted the first flakes
of young narcissus,
and the lesser hyacinth,
and the salt has crept
under the leaves of the white hyacinth.

In my garden
even the wind-flowers lie flat,
broken by the wind at last.

VII

What are the islands to me
if you are lost,
what is Paros to me
if your eyes draw back,
what is Milos
if you take fright of beauty,
terrible, tortuous, isolated,
a barren rock?

What is Rhodes, Crete,
what is Paros facing west,
what, white Imbros?

What are the islands to me
if you hesitate,
what is Greece if you draw back
from the terror
and cold splendor of song
and its bleak sacrifice?

LETHE

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
Nor the fir-tree
Nor the pine.

Nor sight of whin nor gorse
Nor river-yew,
Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you.
Nor of linnet
Nor of thrush.

Nor word nor touch nor sight
Of lover, you
Shall long through the night but for this:
The roll of the full tide to cover you
Without question,
Without kiss.

Hazel Hall was born February 7, 1886, in St. Paul, Minnesota, but as a small child was taken to Portland, Oregon, where she remained the rest of her life. Either from the effects of scarlet fever or as the result of a fall, she was unable to walk after she was twelve years old. She never complained. As Ruth Hall, her sister, wrote in a letter to the editor, "The word 'invalid' was anathema in her ears. Although she was forced to spend her days in a wheel chair, she possessed a rare abundance of health, which enabled her to know life concretely, as a satisfaction for her senses, even though it might remain an abstract sorrow for her mind. She lived life thoroughly, admiring its complexities, with a fine relish for the irony which gave a bitter-sweet taste to the whole."

Curtains, her first volume, which appeared in 1921, is, in the main, a book of charming rather than arresting lyrics; it is evident from the poems that her needle was not only a means of support but a refuge for the poet. The fact that she herself could never walk made her extraordinarily sensitive to the tramp or shuffle of feet; her mind seemed filled with the thought of men marching eternally about the earth. And so her second book, *Walkers* (1923), is filled with the wonder of mere pedestrian life, of a boy whacking a stick against a wall, of couples passing at dusk, of feet half-sinking in snow, of children's heels flashing in the sun.

Her third volume, *Cry of Time* (1929), upon which she was at work at the time of her death, contains her finest writing and the poems by which she probably will be remembered longest. These later poems have the appeal of the first two books with an emotional depth which the early volumes barely suggested. Apart from personal associations which make these lines more poignant, the four poems here reprinted—all from her very last manuscripts—are those which no recorder of the period can afford to overlook and which, eventually, will be rediscovered.

Although Hazel Hall was in sound health until a few weeks before her death, she seemed to have a premonition that the end was near before she became critically ill. She died on May 11, 1924. The last two poems which she wrote were "Slow Death" and "Riddle," both of which appeared in *The New Republic* a fortnight after her death.

FLIGHT

A bird may curve across the sky—
A feather of dusk, a streak of song;
And save a space and a bird to fly
There may be nothing all day long.

Flying through a cloud-made place
A bird may tangle east and west,
Maddened with going, crushing space
With the arrow of its breast.

Though never wind nor motion bring
It back again from indefinite lands,
The thin blue shadow of its wing
May cross and cross above your hands.

ANY WOMAN

When there is nothing left but darkness
And the day is like a leaf
Fallen onto sodden grasses,
You have earned a subtle grief.

Never let them take it from you,
Never let them come and say:
Night is made of black gauze; moonlight
Blows the filmy dark away.

You have a right to know the thickness
Of the night upon your face,
To feel the inky blue of nothing
Drift like ashes out of space.

You have a right to lift your fingers
And stare in pity at your hands
That are the exquisite frail mirrors
Of all the mind misunderstands.

Your hand, potent in portrayal,
Falls of its own weight to rest
In a quiet curve of sorrow
On the beating of your breast.

HERE COMES THE THIEF

Here comes the thief
Men nickname Time,
Oh, hide you, leaf,
And hide you, rhyme.

Leaf, he would take you
And leave you rust.
Rhyme, he would flake you
With spotted dust.
Scurry to cover,
Delicate maid
And serious lover.
Girl, bind the braid
Of your burning hair;
He has an eye
For the lusciously fair
Who passes by.
O lover, hide—
Who comes to plunder
Has the crafty stride
Of unheard thunder.
Quick—lest he snatch,
In his grave need,
And sift and match,
Then sow like seed
Your love's sweet grief
On the backward air,
With the rhyme and the leaf
And the maiden's hair.

SLOW DEATH

You need no other death than this
  Slow death that wears your heart away;
It is enough, the death that is
  Your every night, your every day.

It is enough, the sun that slants
  Across your breast, heavy as steel,
Leaving the rust of radiance
  To shape a wound that will not heal.

Enough, the crystal at your lips,
  Wasting you even as it lies—
Vibrant there before it slips
  Away, torn from your mouth like cries.

There will be now, as fumes from wood,
A passing, yet no new death's care.
You will know only the frustrate mood
Of breath tarnished to color of air.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

William Rose Benét was born at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor, February 2, 1886. He was educated at Albany Academy and graduated from Yale in 1907. After various experiences as free-lance writer, publisher's reader, magazine editor and second lieutenant in the U. S. Air Service, Benét became Associate Editor of the New York Post's *Literary Review* in 1920, resigning in 1924 to become one of the founders and editors of *The Saturday Review of Literature.*

The outstanding feature of Benét's verse is its extraordinary versatility; an Oriental imagination runs through his pages. Like the title-poem of his first volume, *Merchants from Cathay* (1913), Benét's volumes vibrate with a vigorous music; they are full of the sonorous stuff that one rolls out crossing wintry fields or tramping a road alone.

But Benét's charm is not confined to the lift and swing of rollicking choruses. His *The Falconer of God* (1914), *The Great White Wall* (1916) and *The Burglar of the Zodiac* (1918) contain decorations bold as they are brilliant; they ring with a strange and spicy music evoked from seemingly casual words. His scope is wide, although he is most at home in fancies which glow with a half-lurid, half-humorous reflection of the grotesque. There are times indeed when Benét seems to be forcing his ingenuity. The poet frequently lets his fantastic Pegasus run away with him, and what started out to be a gallop among the stars ends in a scraping of shins on the pavement. But he is saved by an acrobatic dexterity even when his energy betrays him. *Perpetual Light* (1919), a memorial to his first wife, is, naturally, a more subdued collection.

Moons of Grandeur (1920) represents an appreciable development of Benét's whimsical gift; a combination of Eastern phantasy and Western vigor. Even more arresting are those poems which appeared subsequent to this volume. A firmer line, a cooler condensation may be found in *Man Possessed* (1927), a selection of the best of the previous volumes with many new poems. "Whale" is a particularly brilliant example; "Jesse James" rocks with high spirits and the true balladist's gusto; "Inscription for a Mirror in a Deserted Dwelling," written during the life of his second

wife, Elinor Wylie, reflects the poet who wrote it and the poet to whom it was written, while "Sagacity" is a tribute to her memory.

Besides his verse, the older Benét is the author of two novels and several tales for children, and the editor (with Henry Seidel Canby and John Drinkwater) of *Twentieth Century Poetry* (1929).

MERCHANTS FROM CATHAY

How that They came.

Their heels slapped their bumping mules; their fat chaps glowed.
Glory unto Mary, each seemed to wear a crown!
Like sunset their robes were on the wide, white road:
So we saw those mad merchants come dusting into town!

Of their Beasts,

Two paunchy beasts they rode on and two they drove before.
May the Saints all help us, the tiger-stripes they had!
And the panniers upon them swelled full of stuffs and ore!
The square buzzed and jostled at a sight so mad.

And their Boast,

They bawled in their beards, and their turbans they wried.
They stopped by the stalls with curvetting and clatter.
As bronze as the bracken their necks and faces dyed—
And a stave they sat singing, to tell us of the matter.

With its Burthen

"For your silks, to Sugarmago! For your dyes, to Isfahan!
Weird fruits from the Isle o' Lamaree.
But for magic merchandise,
For treasure-trove and spice,
Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan,
The King of all the Kings across the sea!

And Chorus.

"Here's a catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan;
For we won through the deserts to his sunset barbican;
And the mountains of his palace no Titan's reach may span
Where he wields his seignorie!

A first Stave Fearsome,

"Red-as-blood skins of panthers, so bright against the sun
On the walls of the halls where his pillared state is set
They daze with a blaze no man may look upon.
And with conduits of beverage those floors run wet.

And a second Right hard To stomach

"His wives stiff with riches, they sit before him there.
Bird and beast at his feast make song and clapping cheer.
And jugglers and enchanters, all walking on the air,
Make fall eclipse and thunder—make moons and suns appear!

And a third, Which is a Laughable Thing.

"Once the Chan, by his enemies sore-prest, and sorely spent,
Lay, so they say, in a thicket 'neath a tree
Where the howl of an owl vexed his foes from their intent:
Then that fowl for a holy bird of reverence made he!

We gape to Hear them end,

"A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan!
Pastmasters of disasters, our desert caravan
Won through all peril to his sunset barbican,
Where he wields his seignorie!
And crowns he gave us! We end where we began:
A catch and a carol to the great, grand Chan!
The King of all the Kings across the sea!"

And are in Terror,

Those mad, antic Merchants! . . . Their stripèd beasts did beat
The market-square suddenly with hooves of beaten gold!
The ground yawned gaping and flamed beneath our feet!
They plunged to Pits Abysmal with their wealth untold!

And dread it is Devil's Work!

And some say the Chan himself in anger dealt the stroke—
For sharing of his secrets with silly, common folk:
But Holy, Blessed Mary, preserve us as you may
Lest once more those mad Merchants come chanting from Cathay!

NIGHT

Let the night keep
What the night takes,
Sighs buried deep,
Ancient heart-aches,
Groans of the lover,
Tears of the lost;
Let day discover not
All the night cost!

Let the night keep
Love's burning bliss,
Drowned in deep sleep
Whisper and kiss,
Thoughts like white flowers
In hedges of May;
Let such deep hours not
Fade with the day!

Monarch is night
Of all eldest things,
Pain and affright,
Rapturous wings;

Night the crown, night the sword
Lifted to smite.
Kneel to your overlord,
Children of night!

THE FAWN IN THE SNOW

The brown-dappled fawn
Bereft of the doe
Shivers in blue shadow
Of the glaring snow,

His whole world bright
As a jewel, and hard,
Diamond white,
Turquoise barred.

The trees are black,
Their needles gold,
Their boughs crack
In the keen cold.

The brown-dappled fawn
Bereft of the doe
Trembles and shudders
At the bright snow.

The air whets
The warm throat,
The frost frets
At the smooth coat.

Brown agate eyes
Opened round
Agonize
At the cold ground,

At the cold heaven
Enameled pale,
At the earth shriven
By the snowy gale,

At magic glitter
Burning to blind,
At beauty bitter
As an almond rind.

Fawn, fawn,
Seek for your south,
For kind dawn
With her cool mouth,

For green sod
With gold and blue
Dappled, as God
Has dappled you, . . .

The shivering fawn
Paws at the snow.
South and dawn
Lie below;

Richness and mirth,
Dearth forgiven,
A happy earth,
A warm heaven.

The sleet streams;
The snow flies;
The fawn dreams
With wide brown eyes.

WHALE

Rain, with a silver flail;
Sun, with a golden ball;
Ocean, wherein the whale
Swims minnow-small;

I heard the whale rejoice
And cynic sharks attend;
He cried with a purple voice,
"The Lord is my Friend!"

"With flanged and battering tail,
With huge and dark baleen,
He said, 'Let there be Whale
In the Cold and Green!'

"He gave me a water-spout,
A side like a harbor wall;
The Lord from cloud looked out
And planned it all.

"With glittering crown atilt
He leaned on a glittering rail;
He said, 'Where Sky is spilt,
Let there be Whale.'

"Tier upon tier of wings
Blushed and blanched and bowed;
Phalanxed fiery things
Cried in the cloud;

"Million-eyed was the mirk
At the plan not understood;
But the Lord looked on his work
And saw it was good.

"He gave me marvelous girth
For the curve of back and breast,
And a tiny eye of mirth
To hide His jest.

"He made me a floating hill,
A plunging deep-sea mine.
This was the Lord's will;
The Lord is Divine.

"I magnify his name
In earthquake and eclipse,
In weltering molten flame
And wrecks of ships,

"In waves that lick the moon;
I, the plow of the sea!
I am the Lord's boon;
The Lord made me!"

The sharks barked from beneath,
As the whale rollicked and roared,
"Yes, and our grinning teeth,
Was it not the Lord?"

Then question pattered like hail
From fishes large and small.
"The Lord is mighty," said Whale,
"The Lord made all!

"His is a mammoth jest
Life may never betray;
He has laid it up in His breast
Till Judgment Day;

"But high when combers foam
And tower their last of all,
My power shall haul you home
Through Heaven wall.

"A trumpet then in the gates,
To the ramps a thundering drum,
I shall lead you where He waits
For His Whale to come.

"Where His cloudy seat is placed
On high in an empty dome,
I shall trail the Ocean abased
In chains of foam,

"Unwieldy, squattering dread.
Where the blazing cohorts stand
At last I shall lift my head
As it feels His hand.

"Then wings with a million eyes
Before mine eyes shall quail:
'Look you, all Paradise,
I was His Whale!' "

I heard the Whale rejoice,
As he splayed the waves to a fan:
"And the Lord shall say with His Voice,
'Leviathan!'

"The Lord shall say with His Tongue,
'Now let all Heaven give hail
To my Jest when I was young,
To my very Whale.' "

Then the Whale careered in the Sea,
He floundered with flailing tail;
Flourished and rollicked he,
"Aha! Mine Empery!
For the Lord said, 'Let Whale Be!'
And there Was Whale!"

BRAZEN TONGUE

Quick in spite I said unkind
Words that should have struck me blind.
Flatly on my eardrums rung
The raucous echoes of my tongue.

Burnished bees in an iron hive
Seemed my wits, and scarce alive
I sat with elbows on my knees
Sick with silence like disease.

Slowly through the solid floor
I sank, till there was nothing more
Than a grease-spot of me there
Shadowed by the upright chair.

O last night I lay awake
Parrying darkness for your sake,
Like an armory glittered bright
The lilied hours of our delight!

O this morning I intended
All the virtues this has ended,
Golden as a new-coined planet!
Now I wither into granite.

Tongue, you are a tongue of fire,
Shriveling like a white-hot wire,
Blackening like a dragon's breath
Flower-fluttering fields with death.

Tongue, you are a tongue of brass
In the jawbone of an ass,
Slaying what was most divine,—
Not the reeking Philistine.

So, she dug me from my quarry;
Came and said that she was sorry;
Sprinkled me with words like myrrh;
So I sat and stared at her;

And so I climb the burning mountain
And sit beside the lava fountain,
And, white with ashes, wonder why
In the devil I am I.

JESSE JAMES

(*A Design in Red and Yellow for a Nickel Library*)

Jesse James was a two-gun man,
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
Strong-arm chief of an outlaw clan.
(*From Kansas to Illinois!*)
He twirled an old Colt forty-five;
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
They never took Jesse James alive.
(*Roll, Missouri, roll!*)

Jesse James was King of the Wes';
(*Cataracts in the Missouri!*)
He'd a di'mon' heart in his lef' breas';
(*Brown Missouri rolls!*)

He'd a fire in his heart no hurt could stifle;
(*Thunder, Missouri!*)
Lion eyes an' a Winchester rifle.
(*Missouri, roll down!*)

Jesse James rode a pinto hawse;
Come at night to a water-cawse;
Tetched with the rowel that pinto's flank;
She sprung the torrent from bank to bank.

Jesse rode through a sleepin' town;
Looked the moonlit street both up an' down;
Crack-crack-crack, the street ran flames
An' a great voice cried, "I'm Jesse James!"

Hawse an' afoot they're after Jess!
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
Spurrin' an' spurrin'—but he's gone Wes'.
(*Brown Missouri rolls!*)
He was ten foot tall when he stood in his boots;
(*Lightnin' like the Missouri!*)
More'n a match fer sich galoots.
(*Roll, Missouri, roll!*)

Jesse James rode outa the sage;
Roun' the rocks come the swayin' stage;
Straddlin' the road a giant stan's
An' a great voice bellers, "Throw up yer han's!"

Jesse raked in the di'mon' rings,
The big gold watches an' the yuther things;
Jesse divvied 'em then an' thar
With a cryin' child had lost her mar.

They're creepin'; they're crawlin', they're stalkin' Jess;
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
They's a rumor he's gone much further Wes';
(*Roll, Missouri, roll!*)
They's word of a cayuse hitched to the bars
(*Ruddy clouds on Missouri!*)
Of a golden sunset that busts into stars.
(*Missouri, roll down!*)

Jesse James rode hell fer leather;
He was a hawse an' a man together;
In a cave in a mountain high up in air
He lived with a rattlesnake, a wolf, an' a bear.

Jesse's heart was as sof' as a woman;
Fer guts an' stren'th he was sooper-human;
He could put six shots through a woodpecker's eye
And take in one swaller a gallon o' rye.

They sought him here an' they sought him there,
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
But he strides by night through the ways of the air;
(*Brown Missouri rolls!*)
They say he was took an' they say he is dead,
(*Thunder, Missouri!*)
But he ain't—he's a sunset overhead!
(*Missouri down to the sea!*)

Jesse James was a Hercules.
When he went through the woods he tore up the trees.
When he went on the plains he smoked the groun'
An' the hull lan' shuddered fer miles aroun'.

Jesse James wore a red bandanner
That waved on the breeze like the Star Spangled Banner;
In seven states he cut up dadoes.
He's gone with the buffler an' the desperadoes.

Yes, Jesse James was a two-gun man
(*Roll on, Missouri!*)
The same as when this song began;
(*From Kansas to Illinois!*)
An' when you see a sunset bust into flames
(*Lightnin' like the Missouri!*)
Or a thunderstorm blaze—that's Jesse James!
(*Hear that Missouri roll!*)

ETERNAL MASCULINE

Neither will I put myself forward as others may do,
Neither, if you wish me to flatter, will I flatter you;
I will look at you grimly, and so you will know I am true.

Neither when all do agree and lout low and salute,
And you are beguiled by the tree and devout for the fruit,
Will I seem to be aught but the following eyes of a brute.

I will stand to one side and sip of my hellebore wine,
I will snarl and deride the antics and airs of the swine;
You will glance in your pride, but I will deny you a sign.

I will squint at the moon and be peaceful because I am dead,
I will whistle a tune and be glad of the harshness I said.
O you will come soon, when the stars are a mist overhead!

You will come, with eyes fierce; you will act a defiant surprise.
Quick lightings will pierce to our hearts from the pain in our eyes,
Standing strained and averse, with the trembling of love that defies.

And then I will know, by the heartbreaking turn of your head,
My madness brought low in a hell that is spared to the dead.
The upas will grow from the poisonous words that I said;

From under its shade out to where like a statue you stand,
Without wish to evade, I will reach, I will cry with my hand,
With my spirit dismayed, with my eyes and my mouth full of sand. . . .

INSCRIPTION FOR A MIRROR IN A DESERTED DWELLING

Set silver cone to tulip flame!
The mantel mirror floats with night
Reflecting still green watery light.
The sconces glimmer. If she came
Like silence through the shadowy wall
Where walls are wading in the moon
The dark would tremble back to June.
So faintly now the moonbeams fall,
So soft this silence, that the verge
Of speech is reached. Remote and pale
As through some faint viridian veil
The lovely lineaments emerge,

The clearly amber eyes, the tint
Of pearl and faintest rose, the hair
To lacquered light, a silken snare
Of devious bronze, the tiny dint
With which her maker mocked the years
Beneath her lip imprinting praise.
Dim flower of desecrating days,
The old reflection, strange with tears,
Is gazing out upon the gloom,
Is widening eyes to find the light
In reminiscence, in the night
Of this foregone, forgotten room.

And you, the watcher, with your eyes
As wide as hers in dark distress,
Who never knew her loveliness
But guess through glass her shadowy guise,
For you around the glass I trace
This secret writing, that will burn
Like witch-fire should her shade return
To haunt you with that wistful face.

At least no gesturing figures pass;
Here is no tragic immanence
Of all the scenes of small events
That pantomimed before the glass.
No bliss, no passion, no despair,
No other actor lingers now;
The moonlight on a lifted brow
Is all,—the eyes so wide aware
Of clouds that pass with stars, and suns,
Of mystery that pales the cheek,
Of all the heart could never speak,
Of joy and pain so vivid once,
That ceased with music and the lights,
Dimming to darkness and repose. . . .
Lean then and kiss that ghostly rose
That was her face, this night of nights,—
And know the vision fled indeed,
The mirror's surface smooth and cold,
The words unbreathed, the tale untold,
The past unpiteous to your need!

SAGACITY

We knew so much; when her beautiful eyes could lighten,
Her beautiful laughter follow our phrase;
Or the gaze go hard with pain, the lips tighten,
On the bitterer days.
Oh, ours was all knowing then, all generous displaying.
Such wisdom we had to show!
And now there is merely silence, silence, silence saying
All we did not know.

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

John Hall Wheelock was born at Far Rockaway, Long Island, in 1886. He was graduated from Harvard, receiving his B.A. in 1908, and finished his studies at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, 1908-10.

Wheelock's first book is, in many respects, his best. *The Human Fantasy* (1911) sings with the voice of youth—youth vibrantly, even vociferously, in love with existence. Rhapsodic and obviously influenced by Whitman and Henley, these lines beat bravely; headlong ecstasy rises from pages whose refrain is "Splendid it is to live and glorious to die." *The Beloved Adventure* (1912) is less powerful, but scarcely less passionate. Lyric after lyric moves by its athletic music and affirmation.

Wheelock's subsequent volumes are less individualized. *Love and Liberation* (1913) and *Dust and Light* (1919) are long dilutions of the earlier strain. The music is still here, but most of the vigor has gone. Wheelock has allowed himself to be exploited by his own fluency and the result is lyrical monotony. Yet vast stretches of two hundred and thirty unvaried love-songs cannot bury a dozen vivid poems which lie, half-concealed, in a waste of verbiage.

The Black Panther (1922) furnishes additional proof that though Wheelock's star may have waned it did not die. In this volume the poet's gift has assumed greater dignity; the flashing athleticism has matured into a steady fervor, the passionate exulting has grown into an exaltation of passion. With the exception of a few innocuous songs, there is revealed a graver music than Wheelock has ever accomplished. In the longer poems he expresses the paradox of conflict and consent: the philosophy of the single Consciousness which reconciles terror and tenderness, murder and

laughter, dawn and destruction—"Life, the dreadful, the magnificent." Affirmation sounds the key-note throughout.

The Bright Doom (1927), although the smallest of Wheelock's volumes, is full of his best and worst. No poem is bad; no poem is quite good enough. The total effect is of desperate sincerity lost in foggy generalities, afloat but floundering in a wash of rhetoric.

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
Over the huddled rows of stone and brick,
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
When this same moment made all mysteries clear;
—The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
So tawdry and so dear!

TRIUMPH OF LOVE

I shake my hair in the wind of morning
For the joy within me that knows no bounds,
I echo backward the vibrant beauty
Wherewith heaven's hollow lute resounds.

I shed my song on the feet of all men,
On the feet of all shed out like wine,
On the whole and the hurt I shed my bounty,
The beauty within me that is not mine.

Turn not away from my song, nor scorn me,
Who bear the secret that holds the sky
And the stars together, but know within me
There speaks another more wise than I.

Nor spurn me here from your heart, to hate me!
Yet hate me here if you will—not so
Myself you hate, but the Love within me
That loves you, whether you would or no.

Here love returns with love to the lover,
And beauty unto the heart thereof,
And hatred unto the heart of the hater,
Whether he would or no, with love!

NIRVANA

Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Over the stars that murmur as they go
Lighting your lattice-window far below;
And every star some of the glory spells
Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you long, long ago,
Like the sweet silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

LOVE AND LIBERATION

Lift your arms to the stars
And give an immortal shout;
Not all the veils of darkness
Can put your beauty out!

You are armed with love, with love,
Nor all the powers of Fate
Can touch you with a spear,
Nor all the hands of hate.

What of good and evil,
Hell and Heaven above—
Trample them with love!
Ride over them with love!

EARTH

Grasshopper, your fairy song
And my poem alike belong
To the dark and silent earth
From which all poetry has birth.
All we say and all we sing
Is but as the murmuring
Of that drowsy heart of hers
When from her deep dream she stirs:
If we sorrow, or rejoice,
You and I are but her voice.

Deftly does the dust express
In mind her hidden loveliness,
And from her cool silence stream
The cricket's cry and Dante's dream;
For the earth that breeds the trees
Breeds cities too, and symphonies.
Equally her beauty flows
Into a savior, or a rose—
Looks down in dream, and from above
Smiles at herself in Jesus' love.
Christ's love and Homer's art
Are but the workings of her heart;
Through Leonardo's hand she seeks
Herself, and through Beethoven speaks
In holy thunderings around
The awful message of the ground.

The serene and humble mold
Does in herself all selves enfold—
Kingdoms, destinies, and creeds,
Great dreams, and dauntless deeds,
Science that metes the firmament,
The high, inflexible intent
Of one for many sacrificed—
Plato's brain, the heart of Christ;
All love, all legend, and all lore
Are in the dust forevermore.

Even as the growing grass,
Up from the soil religions pass,
And the field that bears the rye
Bears parables and prophecy.
Out of the earth the poem grows
Like the lily, or the rose;
And all man is, or yet may be,
Is but herself in agony
Toiling up the steep ascent
Toward the complete accomplishment
When all dust shall be, the whole
Universe, one conscious soul.

Yea, the quiet and cool sod
Bears in her breast the dream of God.
If you would know what earth is, scan
The intricate, proud heart of man,
Which is the earth articulate,
And learn how holy and how great,
How limitless and how profound
Is the nature of the ground—
How without terror or demur
We may entrust ourselves to her
When we are wearied out and lay
Our faces in the common clay.

For she is pity, she is love,
All wisdom, she, all thoughts that move
About her everlasting breast
Till she gathers them to rest:
All tenderness of all the ages,
Seraphic secrets of the sages,
Vision and hope of all the seers,
All prayer, all anguish, and all tears
Are but the dust that from her dream
Awakes, and knows herself supreme—
Are but earth, when she reveals
All that her secret heart conceals
Down in the dark and silent loam,
Which is ourselves, asleep, at home.

Yea, and this, my poem, too,
Is part of her as dust and dew,
Wherein herself she doth declare
Through my lips, and say her prayer.

THIS QUIET DUST

Here in my curving hands I cup
This quiet dust; I lift it up.
Here is the mother of all thought;
Of this the shining heavens are wrought,
The laughing lips, the feet that rove,
The face, the body, that you love:
Mere dust, no more, yet nothing less,
And this has suffered consciousness,
Passion, and terror, this again
Shall suffer passion, death, and pain.

For, as all flesh must die, so all,
Now dust, shall live. 'Tis natural;
Yet hardly do I understand—
Here in the hollow of my hand
A bit of God Himself I keep,
Between two vigils fallen asleep.

JOYCE KILMER

(Alfred) Joyce Kilmer was born at New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 6, 1886. He was graduated from Rutgers College in 1904 and received his A.B. from Columbia in 1906. After leaving Columbia he became, in rapid succession, instructor of Latin at Morristown High School, editor of a journal for horsemen, book salesman, book-reviewer, lexicographer, esthete, interviewer, socialist and churchman.

After Kilmer became converted to Catholicism his conception of the church was the Church Militant. "His thought," writes his biographer, Robert Cortes Holliday, "dwelt continually on warrior-saints. . . . As he saw it, there was no question as to his duty." In 1917 Kilmer joined the Officers' Reserve Training Corps, but he soon resigned from this. In less than three weeks after America entered the World War, he enlisted as a private in the Seventh Regiment, National Guard, New York. Shortly before the regi-

ment left New York for Spartanburg, South Carolina, Kilmer was transferred at his own request to the 165th Infantry. In spite of his avowed militancy, Kilmer was "a poet trying to be a soldier"; he made no effort to glorify war, his one hope was to wring some spiritual satisfaction out of the brutality.

On July 28, 1918, the five-day battle for the mastery of the heights beyond the river Ourcq was begun. Two days later Sergeant Kilmer was killed in action.

Death came before the poet had developed or even matured his gifts. His first volume, *Summer of Love* (1911), is wholly imitative; it is full of reflections of a dozen other sources, "a broken bundle of mirrors." *Trees and Other Poems* (1914) contains the title-poem by which Kilmer is best known and, though various influences are still strong (one cannot miss the borrowed accents of Patmore, Belloc, Chesterton, Housman and—*vide* "Martin"—E. A. Robinson), a refreshing candor brightens the lines. *Main Street and Other Poems* (1917) is less derivative; the simplicity is less self-conscious though the note struck is a familiar one.

Besides his own poetry, Kilmer edited a selection of *Verses* by Hilaire Belloc (1916) and *Dreams and Images*, an anthology of Catholic poets (1917).

TREES

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

MARTIN

When I am tired of earnest men,
Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen
Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of shadowland
Beyond the trackless purple sea
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
A suit to match his soft gray hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
A manner blithe and debonair.

How good that he who always knew
That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
And should himself inhabit beauty.
How like his old unselfish way
To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
Upon the bleak and somber earth.

Some people ask: What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance
And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,—
Such visions made each moment sweet
For this receptive, ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
His genius of appreciation?

Rich joy and love he got and gave;
His heart was merry as his dress.
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
Who did not gain, but was, success.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL

Shaemas O'Sheel (Shields) was born September 19, 1886, in New York City. After graduating from high school, he revived the ancient Gaelic form of his family name and identified himself with the cause of Ireland in America.

O'Sheel's two volumes, *The Blossomy Bough* (1911) and *The Light Feet of Goats* (1915), owe their impetus to the Celtic renascence and to W. B. Yeats in particular. But O'Sheel's poetry, although influenced, is no slavish copy. Ancestry speaks through him with unmistakable accents, making him the typical Irish bard of whom Chesterton has written:

For the great Gaels of Ireland
Are the men that God made mad;
For all their wars are merry
And all their songs are sad.

A recurring if sometimes too determined mysticism and a muffled heroism individualize his work, which O'Sheel critically revised in *Jealous of Dead Leaves* (1928). He cut his one hundred and twenty-seven poems to forty-two, saying, in a modest foreword, "Maturing judgment has, down the years, cast out more and more of them, and wrought considerable changes in many. . . . In the first lyric rapture of youth I literally flowed verse as a spring flows water, and I called it poetry; but now poetry has become a high and distant goal, and a poem seems a kind of miracle." In the following two poems O'Sheel is not far from that goal.

THEY WENT FORTH TO BATTLE, BUT THEY ALWAYS FELL

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
Their eyes were fixed above the sullen shields;
Nobly they fought and bravely, but not well,
And sank heart-wounded by a subtle spell.
They knew not fear that to the foeman yields,
They were not weak, as one who vainly wields
A futile weapon; yet the sad scrolls tell
How on the hard-fought field they always fell.

It was a secret music that they heard,
A sad sweet plea for pity and for peace;
And that which pierced the heart was but a word,
Though the white breast was red-lipped where the sword
Pressed a fierce cruel kiss, to put surcease
On its hot thirst, but drank a hot increase.
Ah, they by some strange troubling doubt were stirred,
And died for hearing what no foeman heard.

They went forth to battle, but they always fell;
Their might was not the might of lifted spears;
Over the battle-clamor came a spell
Of troubling music, and they fought not well.
Their wreaths are willows and their tribute, tears;
Their names are old sad stories in men's ears;
Yet they will scatter the red hordes of Hell,
Who went to battle forth and always fell.

HE WHOM A DREAM HATH POSSESSED

He whom a dream hath possessed knoweth no more of doubting,
For mist and the blowing of winds and the mouthing of words he scorns.
No sinuous speech and smooth he hears, but a knightly shouting,
And never comes darkness down, yet he greeteth a million morns.

He whom a dream hath possessed knoweth no more of roaming.
All roads and the flowing of waves and the speediest flight he knows,
But wherever his feet are set his soul is forever homing,
And going he comes, and coming he heareth a call and goes.

He whom a dream hath possessed knoweth no more of sorrow.
At death and the dropping of leaves and the fading of suns he smiles,
For a dream remembers no past and takes no thought of a morrow,
And staunch amid seas of doom a dream sets the ultimate isles.

He whom a dream hath possessed treads the impalpable marches.
From the dust of the day's long road he leaps to a laughing star,
And the ruin of worlds that fall he views from eternal arches,
And rides God's battlefield in a flashing and golden car.

ROY HELTON

Roy Helton was born at Washington, D. C., in 1886. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1908. He studied art —and found he was color-blind. He spent two years at inventions —and found he had no business sense. After a few more experiments he became a schoolmaster in West Philadelphia and at the Penn Charter School in Germantown.

Helton's first volume, *Youth's Pilgrimage* (1915), is a strange, mystical affair, full of vague symbolism and purple patches. *Outcasts in Beulah Land* (1918) is entirely different in theme and treatment. This is a much starker verse, direct and sharp in its effect.

Helton became intimately connected with primitive backgrounds, spending a great part of his time in the mountains of South Carolina and Kentucky. His later verse shows the influence of this intimacy, a spirit which crept into his fanciful prose, *The Early Adventures of Peacham Grew* (1925), a story which unites quaintness and tragedy in a delicate chronicle of boyhood.

"Old Christmas Morning" is obviously a Kentucky Mountain dialogue in which, not so obviously, Helton has introduced an element rare in modern verse. Told with the directness of an old ballad, this drama of the night twelve days after the universally celebrated Christmas unfolds a ghost story in which the surprise is heightened by the skillful suspensions. "Lonesome Water" is a direct communication in the vernacular. Asked to furnish a glossary, Helton wrote, "It is true that the ballads need footnotes, a living abomination. Yet to suppress the living tongue would be still worse. I have tried to use only the common and most general mountain words, despising that preciosity of folk-talk dug out and patched together which is now a fashion. . . . *Sang:* a universal Southernmountain word for Gin Seng wherever the weed is grown or picked. *Trace:* a trail or footpath. *Pretties:* any sort of toy or decoration. *Uses:* lives."

OLD CHRISTMAS MORNING

(*A Kentucky Mountain Ballad*)

"Where you coming from, Lomey Carter,
So airly over the snow?
And what's them pretties you got in your hand,
And where you aiming to go?

"Step in, Honey: Old Christmas morning
I ain't got nothing much;
Maybe a bite of sweetness and corn bread,
A little ham meat and such.

"But come in, Honey! Sally Anne Barton's
Hungering after your face.
Wait till I light my candle up:
Set down! There's your old place.

"Now where you been so airly this morning?"

"Graveyard, Sally Anne.
Up by the trace in the salt lick meadows
Where Taulbe kilt my man."

"Taulbe ain't to home this morning . . .
I can't scratch up a light:
Dampness gets on the heads of the matches;
But I'll blow up the embers bright."

"Needn't trouble. I won't be stopping:
Going a long ways still."

"You didn't see nothing, Lomey Carter,
Up on the graveyard hill?"

"What should I see there, Sally Anne Barton?"

"Well, sperits do walk last night."

"There were an elder bush a-blooming
While the moon still give some light."

"Yes, elder bushes, they bloom, Old Christmas,
And critters kneel down in their straw.
Anything else up in the graveyard?"

"One thing more I saw:
I saw my man with his head all bleeding
Where Taulbe's shot went through."

"What did he say?"

"He stooped and kissed me."

"What did he say to you?"

"Said, Lord Jesus forguv your Taulbe;
But he told me another word;
He said it soft when he stooped and kissed me.
That were the last I heard."

"Taulbe ain't to home this morning."

"I know that, Sally Anne,
For I kilt him, coming down through the meadow
Where Taulbe kilt my man.

"I met him upon the meadow trace
When the moon were fainting fast,
And I had my dead man's rifle gun
And kilt him as he come past."

"But I heard two shots."

"'Twas his was second:
He shot me 'fore he died:
You'll find us at daybreak, Sally Anne Barton:
I'm laying there dead at his side."

LONESOME WATER

Drank lonesome water:
Warn't but a tad then
Up in a laurel thick
Digging for sang;
Came on a place where
The stones were hollow,
Something below them
Tinkled and rang.

Dug whar I heard it
Drippling below me:
Should a knowd better,
Should a been wise;
Leant down and drank it,
Clutching and gripping
The over hung cliv
With the ferns in my eyes.

Tasted of heart leaf
And that smells the sweetest,
Pawpaw and spice bush
And wild brier rose;
Must a been counting
The heels of the spruce pines,
And neighboring round
Whar angelica grows.

I'd drunk lonesome water,
I knowed in a minute:
Never larnt nothing
From then till today:
Nothing worth larning
Nothing worth knowing,
I'm bound to the hills
And I can't get away.

Mean sort of dried up old
Ground hoggy fellow,
Laying out cold here
Watching the sky;
Pore as a hipporwill,
Bent like a grass blade;
Counting up stars
Till they count too high.

I know whar the gray foxes
Uses up yander:
Know what will cure you
Of tisic and chills,

But I never been way from here,
Never got going;
I've drunk lonesome water.
I'm bound to the hills.

DAVID MORTON

David Morton was born at Elkton, Kentucky, February 21, 1886. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1909, engaging in newspaper work immediately thereafter. After ten years of writing for various papers in the South, Morton came to New Jersey, where he lived, teaching English at Morristown High School, until 1924, when he went to teach at Amherst.

The greater part of Morton's work is in the sonnet form, bringing to it a certain vague charm which, after many repetitions, tends to become cloying. The best of his verses are to be found in his first volume, *Ships in Harbor and Other Poems* (1921).

Harvest (1924) proves that Morton has mastered his craft as a maker of sonnets. Unfortunately, it proves nothing more: the lines are smooth, fluently phrased, but with few individual images. There is a frail grace of thought, but no impact of personality, no reflection of experience. As has already been stated, it is evident that Morton has learned the technique of his favorite form. It is also evident that he has learned it entirely too well.

SYMBOLS

Beautiful words, like butterflies, blow by,
  With what swift colors on their fragile wings!—
Some that are less articulate than a sigh,
  Some that were names of ancient, lovely things.
What delicate careerings of escape,
  When they would pass beyond the baffled reach,
To leave a haunting shadow and a shape,
  Eluding still the careful traps of speech.

And I who watch and listen, lie in wait,
  Seeing the cloudy cavalcades blow past,
Happy if some bright vagrant, soon or late,
  May venture near the snares of sound, at last—
Most fortunate captor if, from time to time,
One may be taken, trembling, in a rhyme.

OLD SHIPS

There is a memory stays upon old ships,
A weightless cargo in the musty hold,—
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,
Of stormy midnights,—and a tale untold.
They have remembered islands in the dawn,
And windy capes that tried their slender spars,
And tortuous channels where their keels have gone,
And calm blue nights of stillness and the stars.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore;
And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

ANNE SINGLETON

Anne Singleton (the pseudonym under which a well-known anthropologist writes her poetry) was born in New York City in 1887. After finishing her schooling she spent a year in Europe, chiefly in Florence and Dresden. Her home has been in New York City for many years, but she divides time with New Mexico. Her verses have been published chiefly in *The Nation*, in *Poetry*, and in *The Measure*.

Anne Singleton's manner is influenced but interesting; her condensations do not conceal the accents of Léonie Adams and Louise Bogan, but her metaphysics are her own.

BUT THE SON OF MAN

Foxes have holes, and in the wintry weather
Save themselves warm at price of breath and bone;
Playing to shortened strength a shortened tether,
Taking to breast a stone.

Their light feet tranced, their blood become as earthy
As sodden marshes when the flood is gone,
They sleep, not knowing bereavement, content, worthy,
The ecstasy withdrawn.

So at the winter of the blood we straighten
Our limbs to quiet, crying flesh to find
Oblivion as the foxes', sunforsaken,
Deaf and dumb and blind.

UNSHADOWED POOL

You are a pool unshadowed by cast luster,
Crystal as air, having no skill to hold
Skies that are cloudy petaled, and the rushes blowing,
Intricate patterns and sun-aureoled.

Pools should be spread with design caught at heaven,
Laced by near stems, and taking the quick bird.
They should be garmented with far-sought garments
Lest any come there and find the pool unstirred;

Lest, at arm's length, pebble to pebble lying,
Life's farthest depths show clear as whitened bone,
Nothing be water-misted, nothing secret,
Past the rent altar veil, the common stone.

ORRICK JOHNS

Orrick Johns was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1887. He schooled himself to be an advertising copy writer, his creative work being kept as an avocation.

Asphalt and Other Poems (1917) is a queer mixture. Cheap stanzas crowd against lines of singular beauty; poor dialect verse elbows lyrics that are without a false note. The same incongruity is evident in *Black Branches* (1920), where much that is strained and artificial mingles with poetry that is spontaneous. At his best, notably in the refreshing "Country Rhymes," Johns is a true singer, a lyricist of no small stature.

Although Johns' long poem "Second Avenue" won the first prize offered by the editor of *The Lyric Year* (1912), the anthology which first brought to light Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence," his more representative work is entirely in the short measure. *Wild Plum* (1926) assembles the best of his lyrics, which are not without searching moments. The simplicities are genuine and such songs as "The Interpreter," "Little Things" and "Wild Plum" are not easily forgotten.

THE INTERPRETER

In the very early morning when the light was low
She got all together and she went like snow,
Like snow in the springtime on a sunny hill,
And we were only frightened and can't think still.

We can't think quite that the katydids and frogs
And the little crying chickens and the little grunting hogs,
And the other living things that she spoke for to us
Have nothing more to tell her since it happened thus.

She never is around for any one to touch,
But of ecstasy and longing she too knew much . . .
And always when any one has time to call his own
She will come and be beside him as quiet as a stone.

LITTLE THINGS

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay
About the rush of faces in the town by day;
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed . . .
And the soft March wind and the low March mist
Are better than kisses in a dark street kissed . . .
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,
The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn
When the feast is laid for a day new-born . . .
Oh, better let the little things I loved when little
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;
And better is a temple made of bark and thong
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

DILEMMA

What though the moon should come
With a blinding glow,

And the stars have a game
On the wood's edge. . . .
A man would have to still
Cut and weed and sow,
And lay a white line
When he plants a hedge.

What though God
With a great sound of rain
Came to talk of violets
And things people do. . . .
I would have to labor
And dig with my brain
Still to get a truth
Out of all words new.

WILD PLUM

They are unholy who are born
To love wild plum at night,
Who once have passed it on a road
Glimmering and white.

It is as though the darkness had
Speech of silver words,
Or as though a cloud of stars
Perched like ghostly birds.

They are unpitied from their birth
And homeless in men's sight,
Who love, better than the earth,
Wild plum at night.

MARIANNE MOORE

Marianne Moore was born in St. Louis, Missouri, November 15, 1887. She received her B.A. from Bryn Mawr College in 1909; taught stenography at the United States Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, from 1911 to 1915; was an assistant in the Hudson Park Branch of the New York Public Library, and editor of *The Dial* from 1925 to its demise in 1929.

Her verse was first published in *The Egoist* (London) in 1915

and, although her unusual lines attracted immediate attention, an inherent reticence kept her from submitting a collection to any publisher. It was not until 1921 that a few of her friends felt it incumbent upon themselves to "pirate" her work and so, without her coöperation, *Poems* was published in that year by *The Egoist Press*. Three years later (in December, 1924), she received the Dial Award of two thousand dollars for "distinguished service to American letters." Her *Observations* (1924), a volume including the earlier poems as well as the more recent ones, appeared at the same time.

Miss Moore's work is frankly puzzling, not only to the disinterested reader, but to the avowed student of modern poetry. Although her early verses present no difficulties, her more characteristic lines seem to erect a barrier of jagged clauses, barbed quotations and suspicious structures between herself and her audience. It has been asserted, and the editor shares this opinion, that Miss Moore's highly intellectualized dissertations are actually part of the domain of criticism rather than of poetry, and that her creations are in the latter division chiefly because of the physical pattern of her lines. Her studies are usually scornful and always sophisticated, varying between statements which seem to be seeking their prose origins and an intellectual dexterity: a sort of witty and ironic geometry. Her satires are in a new *genre* and her observations are both precise and fantastic—she sees zebras "supreme in their abnormality," elephants "with their fog-colored skins."

Whether or not Miss Moore's essays are actually poetry—a matter which cannot be determined until that indefinable term itself is defined—there can be no doubt about the incision of her ideas and the bite of her language. "To a Steam Roller" and "The Fish" are compact with surprises in which the fact and its surrounding figures are more of a critical unit than first appears. Hers is never, not even in her most eccentric designs, a loose structure of fortuitous phrases; the expression is as clenched and controlled as the thought.

A TALISMAN

Under a splintered mast,
torn from the ship and cast
near her hull,

a stumbling shepherd found,
embedded in the ground,
a sea-gull

of lapis lazuli,
a scarab of the sea,
with wings spread—

curling its coral feet,
parting its beak to greet
men long dead.

THAT HARP YOU PLAY SO WELL

O David, if I had
Your power, I should be glad—
In harping, with the sling,
In patient reasoning!

Blake, Homer, Job, and you,
Have made old wine-skins new.
Your energies have wrought
Stout continents of thought.

But, David, if the heart
Be brass, what boots the art
Of exorcising wrong,
Of harping to a song?

The scepter and the ring
And every royal thing
Will fail. Grief's lustiness
Must cure the harp's distress.

TO A STEAM ROLLER

The illustration
is nothing to you without the application.
You lack half wit. You crush all the particles down
into close conformity, and then walk back and forth on
them.

Sparkling chips of rock
are crushed down to the level of the parent block.
Were not "impersonal judgment in esthetic
matters, a metaphysical impossibility," you

might fairly achieve
it. As for butterflies, I can hardly conceive
of one's attending upon you; but to question
the congruence of the complement is vain, if it exists.

ENGLAND

with its baby rivers and little towns, each with its abbey or its cathedral;
with voices—one voice perhaps, echoing through the transept—the
criterion of suitability and convenience: and Italy with its equal
shores—contriving an epicureanism from which the grossness has been

extracted: and Greece with its goats and its gourds, the nest of modified illusions:
and France, the "chrysalis of the nocturnal butterfly" in
whose products, mystery of construction diverts one from what was originally one's
object—substance at the core: and the East with its snails, its emotional

shorthand and jade cockroaches, its rock crystal and its imperturbability,
all of museum quality: and America where there
is the little old ramshackle victoria in the south, where cigars are smoked on the
street in the north; where there are no proof readers, no silkworms, no digressions;

the wild man's land; grass-less, links-less, language-less country—in which letters are written
not in Spanish, not in Greek, not in Latin, not in shorthand,
but in plain American which cats and dogs can read! The letter "a" in psalm and calm when
pronounced with the sound of "a" in candle, is very noticeable but

why should continents of misapprehension have to be accounted for by the
fact? Does it follow that because there are poisonous toadstools
which resemble mushrooms, both are dangerous? In the case of mettlesomeness which may be
mistaken for appetite, of heat which may appear to be haste, no con-

clusions may be drawn. To have misapprehended the matter, is to have confessed
that one has not looked far enough. The sublimated wisdom
of China, Egyptian discernment, the cataclysmic torrent of emotion compressed
in the verbs of the Hebrew language, the books of the man who is able

to say, "I envy nobody but him and him only, who catches more fish than
I do,"—the flower and fruit of all that noted superiority—should one not have stumbled upon it in America, must one imagine
that it is not there? It has never been confined to one locality.

THE FISH

Wade
through black jade
Of the crow-blue mussel shells, one
keeps
adjusting the ash heaps;
opening and shutting itself like

an
injured fan.
The barnacles which encrust the
side
of the wave, cannot hide
there for the submerged shafts of the

sun,
split like spun
glass, move themselves with spotlight swift-
ness
into the crevices—
in and out, illuminating

the
turquoise sea
of bodies. The water drives a
wedge
of iron through the iron edge
of the cliff, whereupon the stars,

pink
rice grains, ink
bespattered jelly-fish, crabs like
green
lilies and submarine
toadstools, slide each on the other.

All
external
marks of abuse are present on
this
defiant edifice—
all the physical features of

ac-
cident—lack
of cornice, dynamite grooves, burns
and
hatchet strokes, these things stand
out on it; the chasm side is

dead.
Repeated
evidence has proved that it can
live
on what cannot revive
its youth. The sea grows old in it.

Robinson Jeffers' condensed autobiography runs as follows: "Born in Pittsburgh in 1887; my parents carried me about Europe a good deal. Of the first visit I remember three things—a pocketful of snails loosed on the walls of a kindergarten in Zürich, paintings of Keats and Shelley hanging side by side somewhere in London, and Arthur's Seat, the hill about Edinburgh. When I was fifteen I was brought home. Next year my family moved to California and I graduated at eighteen from Occidental College, Los Angeles. After that, desultory years at the University of Southern California, University of Zürich, Medical School in Los Angeles, University of Washington, but with faint interest. I wasn't deeply interested in anything but poetry. I married Una Call Kuster in 1913. We were going to England in the autumn of 1914. But the August news turned us to this village of Carmel instead; and when the stagecoach topped the hill from Monterey, and we looked down through pines and sea-fogs on Carmel Bay, it was evident that we had come without knowing it to our inevitable place."

Flagons and Apples (1912) was Jeffers' undistinguished first volume; it was followed by *Californians* (1916), a scarcely more original book. In 1925 *Tamar and Other Poems* was brought out by a small printer and caused an overnight sensation. It was reprinted the following year, with the addition of new work, as *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems* (1926). This, it was evident at once, was masculine poetry, stark, even terrible in its intensities. Whatever defects this verse has—and it must be confessed that Jeffers piles on his catastrophes with little humor and less restraint—there is no denying its elemental power. He combines two almost contrary types of strength: the impetuous American and the stoic Greek.

The Women at Point Sur (1927) shows how easily Jeffers can swing the long line, how suddenly his phrases soar from the tawdry into the terrible, how boldly he can lift a language which, in the hands of most poets, would be nothing more than wild rhetoric.

Cawdor (1928) again reveals Jeffers turning away from gentle themes to almost unbearable ones. The long poem is a continuation of the bewilderment announced in the preceding volumes. Jeffers himself says, "I think of *Cawdor* as making a third with *Tamar* and *The Women at Point Sur;* but as if in *Tamar* human affairs had been seen looking westward against the ocean; in *Point Sur* looking upward, minimized to ridicule against the stars; in *Cawdor* looking eastward, against the earth, reclaiming a little dignity from that association. . . . Where not only generations but races drizzle away so fast, one wonders the more ur-

gently what it is for, and whether this beautiful earth is amused or sorry at the procession of her possessors." There are also a number of shorter poems, not actually subversive but, continues Jeffers, "the mere common sense of our predicament as passionate bits of earth and water." . . . The setting of *Cawdor* is monstrous, the symbols excessive, the speech of his characters unreal; yet the backgrounds are not much more tragic than Jeffers' own weird Carmel coast and his people move in an atmosphere larger if more forbidding than reality. As in his other work, exaggerations of lust and violence outdo each other; but these, which in a lesser man would be absurd, are compelling because of the sheer force behind them and the malefic universe they imply.

This force is not only inherent in Jeffers' extraordinary language, but in his demonic search for ultimates. He disdains the illusions by which man makes life endurable: love, nature, the mind—these are all self-destructive and useless. Quiet is empty denial and peace a forlorn hope. Death seems the one freedom, "the huge gift," but annihilation itself, he realizes, is impossible. There is left only despair—and this is the cry beneath Jeffers' strength. The longing for oblivion explains his wild dreams, bloodshot landscapes, inhuman crimes, incests, brutalities, nightmare-struggles where life "drinks her defeat and devours her famine for food."

Thus he celebrates "the charm of the dark," enlarges on passions turned inward and men "all matted in one mesh"; he sings a frustrated *Dies Irae* to unresponding Nothingness. Therefore the things he loves best are rocks, black cypresses, depths of ocean, granite mountains—things that have their being without ambition, without hope, without consciousness.

But negation alone cannot explain the poet's persuasion. An examination of his utterance discloses a strange phenomenon: Jeffers preaches the gospel of Nothingness in impassioned periods. He mourns, with inconsistent vigor, "the broken balance, the hopeless prostration of the earth under men's hands." His Jesus (in *Dear Judas*) is only an extension of the fanatically possessive Barclay (in *The Women at Point Sur*); even mystical passion becomes a high-pitched turbulence and love a last despair.

Thus Jeffers is in danger of emotional abandonment. His dramas are conditioned not by the exigencies of the situation nor by the demands of his characters, but by Jeffers' inverted violences. The chaos is self-generated; the didacticism no less didactic for being nullifying and uncontrolled; the imagination is too often disturbed by intellectual hysteria.

Dear Judas (1929) is composed of two long and a few short poems, the two longer ones bearing a relation to each other in the

contrasted aspects of love, the shorter ones condensing Jeffers' philosophy into some of his finest moments. Like his other work, *Dear Judas* exhibits Jeffers projecting blind and bewildering Nature, misconceiving man as a "spectral episode." Here again is energy threshing in meaninglessness; here is force in need of a faith.

Thurso's Landing (1932) consists of one long poem and several highly characteristic shorter ones. The title-poem must rank among Jeffers' most important creations—a poem in which sheer power and eloquence triumph above black and unrelieved melodrama.

Superficially, because of his loose musical line, Jeffers seems to resemble Whitman, but his spirit is the very opposite of that rude yea-sayer. Where Whitman loses himself in all-embracing affirmations, Jeffers loses himself—and the world—in all-inclusive negations. The Californian poet turns against the sense of love which upheld Whitman and which he upheld; until man can "love outwardly," love of man, to Jeffers, is only "the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught—they say—God, when he walked on earth." It was, however, not so much Jeffers' negations to which the critics objected as to his abnormal themes. This was the more curious since, beneath his preoccupations with abnormality, the poet implied a definite morality. Jeffers explained this element of his work in a letter which leaves no doubt of his intentions: "In *Tamar* a little and in *The Women at Point Sur* consciously and definitely, incest is symbolized racial introversion: man regarding man exclusively—founding his values, desires, a picture of the universe, all on his own humanity. . . . The tendency to romanticize unmoral freedom leads to destruction—often of the individual but always of the social organism. One of the intentions of *Point Sur* was to indicate the destruction and strip everything but its natural ugliness from the unmorality." Love that "turns inward" is thus shown as the opposite of love; chaotic, evil, not only self- but all-destructive.

Yet if Jeffers feeds on destruction and terror he is not sickened but sustained by it. His poetry communicates with force if not with power that stony vigor. It never falters, but sweeps on, cumulative and irresistible. His epithets are always exact, his occasional metaphors as inevitable as "the leopard-footed evening," "she moved sighing, like a loose fire"; a hawk's wing "trails like a banner in defeat." He muses on "the lame feet of salvation," sees "Orion strung in the throat of the valley like a lamp-lighted bridge," hears "the stars blow long pipings of light." In his shorter poems, as well as in the longer and more elaborated work, Jeffers sounds a major music. He achieves a startling paradox: he sings death with such fervor that his bitter darkness shines more vividly than most surrounding sweetness and light.

COMPENSATION

Solitude that unmakes me one of men
In snow-white hands brings singular recompense,
Evening me with kindlier natures when
On the needled pinewood the cold dews condense
About the hour of Rigel fallen from heaven
In wintertime, or when the long night tides
Sigh blindly from the sand-dune backward driven,
Or when on stormwings of the northwind rides
The foamscud with the cormorants, or when passes
A horse or dog with brown affectionate eyes,
Or autumn frosts are pricked by earliest grasses,
Or whirring from her covert a quail flies.
Why, even in humanity, beauty and good
Show from the mountainside of solitude.

AGE IN PROSPECT

Praise youth's hot blood if you will, I think that happiness
Rather consists in having lived clear through
Youth and hot blood, on to the wintrier hemisphere
Where one has time to wait and to remember.

Youth and hot blood are beautiful, so is peacefulness.
Youth had some islands in it, but age is indeed
An island and a peak; age has infirmities,
Not few, but youth is all one fever.

To look around and to love in his appearances,
Though a little calmly, the universal God's
Beauty is better I think than to lip eagerly
The mother's breast or another woman's.

And there is no possession more sure than memory's;
But if I reach that gray island, that peak,
My hope is still to possess with eyes the homeliness
Of ancient loves, ocean and mountains,

And meditate the sea-mouth of mortality
And the fountain six feet down with a quieter thirst
Than now I feel for old age; a creature progressively
Thirsty for life will be for death too.

ANTE MORTEM

It is likely enough that lions and scorpions
Guard the end; life never was bonded to be endurable nor the act of dying
Unpainful; the brain burning too often
Earns, though it held itself detached from the object, often a burnt age.
No matter, I shall not shorten it by hand.
Incapable of body or unmoved of brain is no evil, one always went envying
The quietness of stones. But if the striped blossom
Insanity spread lewd splendors and lightning terrors at the end of the forest;
Or intolerable pain work its known miracle,
Exile the monarch soul, set a sick monkey in the office . . . remember me
Entire and balanced when I was younger,
And could lift stones, and comprehend in the praises the cruelties of life.

POST MORTEM

Happy people die whole, they are all dissolved in a moment, they have had what they wanted,
No hard gifts; the unhappy
Linger a space, but pain is a thing that is glad to be forgotten; but one who has given
His heart to a cause or a country,
His ghost may spaniel it a while, disconsolate to watch it. I was wondering how long the spirit
That sheds this verse will remain
When the nostrils are nipped, when the brain rots in its vault or bubbles in the violence of fire
To be ash in metal. I was thinking
Some stalks of the wood whose roots I married to the earth of this place will stand five centuries;
I held the roots in my hand,
The stems of the trees between two fingers; how many remote generations of women
Will drink joy from men's loins,

And dragged from between the thighs of what mothers will
giggle at my ghost when it curses the axmen,
Gray impotent voice on the sea-wind,
When the last trunk falls? The women's abundance will have
built roofs over all this foreland;
Will have buried the rock foundations
I laid here: the women's exuberance will canker and fail in
its time and like clouds the houses
Unframe, the granite of the prime
Stand from the heaps: come storm and wash clean: the plaster
is all run to the sea and the steel
All rusted; the foreland resumes
The form we loved when we saw it. Though one at the end of
the age and far off from this place
Should meet my presence in a poem,
The ghost would not care but be here, long sunset shadow
in the seams of the granite, and forgotten
The flesh, a spirit for the stone.

NOON

The pure air trembles, O pitiless God,
The air aches with flame on these gaunt rocks
Over the flat sea's face, the forest
Shakes in gales of piercing light.

But the altars are behind and higher
Where the great hills raise naked heads,
Pale antagonists in the reverberance
Of the pure air and the pitiless God.

On the domed skull of every hill
Who stand blazing with spread vans,
The arms uplifted, the eyes in ecstasy?

What wine has the God drunk, to sing
Violently in heaven, what wine his worshipers
Whose silence blazes? The light that is over
Light, the terror of noon, the eyes
That the eagles die at, have thrown down
Me and my pride, here I lie naked
In a hollow of the shadowless rocks,
Full of the God, having drunk fire.

CLOUDS OF EVENING

Enormous cloud-mountains that form over Point Lobos and into the sunset,
Figures of fire on the walls of tonight's storm,
Foam of gold in gorges of fire, and the great file of warrior angels:
Dreams gathering in the curdled brain of the earth—
The sky the brain-vault—on the threshold of sleep: poor earth, you, like your children
By inordinate desires tortured, make dreams?
Storms more enormous, wars nobler, more toppling mountains, more jeweled waters, more free
Fires on impossible headlands . . . as a poor girl
Wishing her lover taller and more desirous, and herself maned with gold,
Dreams the world right, in the cold bed, about dawn.
Dreams are beautiful; the slaves of form are beautiful also; I have grown to believe
A stone is a better pillow than many visions.

TO THE STONE-CUTTERS

Stone-cutters fighting time with marble, you foredefeated
Challengers of oblivion
Eat cynical earnings, knowing rock splits, records fall down,
The square-limbed Roman letters
Scale in the thaws, wear in the rain. The poet as well
Builds his monument mockingly;
For man will be blotted out, the blithe earth die, the brave sun
Die blind, his heart blackening:
Yet stones have stood for a thousand years, and pained thoughts found
The honey peace in old poems.

GALE IN APRIL

Intense and terrible beauty, how has our race with the frail naked nerves,
So little a craft swum down from its far launching?
Why now, only because the northwest blows and the headed grass billows,

Great seas jagging the west and on the granite
Blanching, the vessel is brimmed, this dancing play of the world is too much passion.
A gale in April so overfilling the spirit,
Though his ribs were thick as the earth's, arches of mountain, how shall one dare to live,
Though his blood were like the earth's rivers and his flesh iron,
How shall one dare to live? One is born strong, how do the weak endure it?
The strong lean upon death as on a rock,
After eighty years there is shelter and the naked nerves shall be covered with deep quietness.
O beauty of things go on, go on, O torture
Of intense joy, I have lasted out my time, I have thanked God and finished,
Roots of millennial trees fold me in the darkness,
Northwest wind shake their tops, not to the root, not to the root, I have passed
From beauty to the other beauty, peace, the night splendor.

CREDO

My friend from Asia has powers and magic, he plucks a blue leaf from the young blue-gum
And gazing upon it, gathering and quieting
The God in his mind, creates an ocean more real than the ocean, the salt, the actual
Appalling presence, the power of the waters.
He believes that nothing is real except as we make it.
I humbler have found in my blood
Bred west of Caucasus a harder mysticism.
Multitude stands in my mind but I think that the ocean in the bone vault is only
The bone vault's ocean: out there is the ocean's;
The water is the water, the cliff is the rock, come shocks and flashes of reality. The mind
Passes, the eye closes, the spirit is a passage;
The beauty of things was born before eyes and sufficient to itself; the heart-breaking beauty
Will remain when there is no heart to break for it.

PROMISE OF PEACE

The heads of strong old age are beautiful
Beyond all grace of youth. They have strange quiet,
Integrity, health, soundness, to the full
They've dealt with life and been attempered by it.
A young man must not sleep; his years are war
Civil and foreign but the former's worse;
But the old can breathe in safety now that they are
Forgetting what youth meant, the being perverse,
Running the fool's gauntlet and being cut
By the whips of the five senses. As for me,
If I should wish to live long it were but
To trade those fevers for tranquillity,
Thinking though that's entire and sweet in the grave
How shall the dead taste the deep treasure they have?

APOLOGY FOR BAD DREAMS[1]

I

In the purple light, heavy with redwood, the slopes drop seaward,
Headlong convexities of forest, drawn in together to the steep ravine. Below, on the sea-cliff,
A lonely clearing; a little field of corn by the streamside; a roof under spared trees. Then the ocean
Like a great stone some one has cut to a sharp edge and polished to shining. Beyond it, the fountain
And furnace of incredible light flowing up from the sunk sun. In the little clearing a woman
Was punishing a horse; she had tied the halter to a sapling at the edge of the wood; but when the great whip
Clung to the flanks the creature kicked so hard she feared he would snap the halter; she called from the house
The young man her son; who fetched a chain tie-rope, they working together
Noosed the small rusty links round the horse's tongue
And tied him by the swollen tongue to the tree.

[1] A poem which explains Jeffers' attitude to his poetry better than any essay.

Seen from this height they are shrunk to insect size,
Out of all human relation. You cannot distinguish
The blood dripping from where the chain is fastened,
The beast shuddering; but the thrust neck and the legs
Far apart. You can see the whip fall on the flanks. . . .
The gesture of the arm. You cannot see the face of the woman.
The enormous light beats up out of the west across the cloud-
bars of the trade-wind. The ocean
Darkens, the high clouds brighten, the hills darken together.
Unbridled and unbelievable beauty
Covers the evening world . . . not covers, grows apparent out
of it, as Venus down there grows out
From the lit sky. What said the prophet? "I create good: and I
create evil: I am the Lord."

II

This coast crying out for tragedy like all beautiful places,
(The quiet ones ask for quieter suffering; but here the granite
cliff the gaunt cypresses' crown
Demands what victim? The dykes of red lava and black what
Titan? The hills like pointed flames
Beyond Soberanes, the terrible peaks of the bare hills under
the sun, what immolation?)
This coast crying out for tragedy like all beautiful places:
and like the passionate spirit of humanity
Pain for its bread: God's, many victims', the painful deaths,
the horrible transfigurements: I said in my heart,
"Better invent than suffer: imagine victims
Lest your own flesh be chosen the agonist, or you
Martyr some creature to the beauty of the place." And I said,
"Burn sacrifices once a year to magic
Horror away from the house, this little house here
You have built over the ocean with your own hands
Beside the standing bowlders: for what are we,
The beast that walks upright, with speaking lips
And little hair, to think we should always be fed,
Sheltered, intact, and self-controlled? We sooner more liable
Than the other animals. Pain and terror, the insanities of de-
sire; not accidents, but essential,
And crowd up from the core." I imagined victims for those
wolves, I made the phantoms to follow.

They have hunted the phantoms and missed the house. It is not
good to forget over what gulls the spirit
Of the beauty of humanity, the petal of a lost flower blown
seaward by the night-wind, floats to its quietness.

III

Bowlders blunted like an old bear's teeth break up from the
headland; below them
All the soil is thick with shells, the tide-rock feasts of a dead
people.
Here the granite flanks are scarred with ancient fire, the ghosts
of the tribe
Crouch in the nights beside the ghost of a fire, they try to
remember the sunlight,
Light has died out of their skies. These have paid something
for the future
Luck of the country, while we living keep old griefs in mem-
ory: though God's
Envy is not a likely fountain of ruin, to forget evil calls down
Sudden reminders from the cloud: remembered deaths be our
redeemers;
Imagined victims our salvation: white as the half moon at
midnight
Some one flamelike passed me, saying, "I am Tamar Cauldwell,
I have my desire,"
Then the voice of the sea returned, when she had gone by, the
stars to their towers.
. . . Beautiful country, burn again, Point Pinos down to the
Sur Rivers
Burn as before with bitter wonders, land and ocean and the
Carmel water.

IV

He brays humanity in a mortar to bring the savor
From the bruised root: a man having bad dreams, who in-
vents victims, is only the ape of that God.
He washes it out with tears and many waters, calcines it with
fire in the red crucible,
Deforms it, makes it horrible to itself: the spirit flies out and
stands naked, he sees the spirit.

He takes it in the naked ecstasy; it breaks in his hand, the
atom is broken, the power that massed it
Cries to the power that moves the stars, "I have come home to
myself, behold me.
I bruised myself in the flint mortar and burnt me
In the red shell, I tortured myself, I flew forth,
Stood naked of myself and broke me in fragments,
And here am I moving the stars that are me."
I have seen these ways of God: I know of no reason
For fire and change and torture and the old returnings.
He being sufficient might be still. I think they admit no rea-
son; they are the ways of my love.
Unmeasured power, incredible passion, enormous craft: no
thought apparent but burns darkly
Smothered with its own smoke in the human brain-vault: no
thought outside: a certain measure in phenomena:
The fountains of the boiling stars, the flowers on the foreland,
the ever-returning roses of dawn.

ELINOR WYLIE

Elinor (Hoyt) Wylie was born in 1887, in Somerville, New Jersey, but she was, she often protested, completely a Pennsylvanian by inheritance. On both sides she traced her ancestry back through old American families. A grandfather was Governor of Pennsylvania, her father was solictor-general in Roosevelt's administration. Her girlhood was passed in Washington, D. C. After girlhood, she traveled and lived abroad, thought of being a painter, and published her first tentative collection of verse. This tiny blue-gray volume of forty-three pages was issued anonymously ten years before her public début and has been for a long time out of print. In 1921 *Nets to Catch the Wind* appeared and Mrs. Wylie's name was suddenly spread throughout the country. She was married to William Rose Benét in 1924.

Nets to Catch the Wind is one of the most brilliant "first" volumes published in the last twenty years. The brilliance is one which, at first, seems to sparkle without burning. In several of the poems the author achieves a frigid ecstasy; emotion is not absent from her lines, but too frequently it seems a passion frozen at its source. It is the brilliance of moonlight coruscating on a plain of ice. But if Mrs. Wylie seldom allows her verses to become heated, she never permits them to remain dull. As a technician,

she is always admirable; in "August" the sense of heat is conveyed by tropic luxuriance and contrast, in "The Eagle and the Mole" she lifts didacticism to a proud level. Her auditory effects are scarcely less remarkable; never has snow-silence been more unerringly communicated than in "Velvet Shoes."

Black Armour (1923) exhibits Mrs. Wylie's keenness against a mellower background. The beauty evoked in this volume no longer has "the hard heart of a child." As the intellect has grown more fiery, the mood has grown warmer while the craftsmanship is more dazzling than ever. This devotee of severe elegance has perfected an accent which is clipped and patrician; she varies the perfect modulation with rhymes that are delightfully acrid and departures which never fail of unique success. Mrs. Wylie, it is evident from the very titles of her volumes, had read the metaphysicians; Donne, Webster and (to make a great leap) Eliot found a voice in her lines. She felt

> "behind a carnal mesh,
> The clean bones crying in the flesh."

Possibly the most obvious and arresting feature of her work is the variety of her gifts. She reached from the nimble dexterity of a rondo like "Peregrine" to the introspective poignance of "Self Portrait," from the fanciful "Escape" to the grave mockery of "Let No Charitable Hope." But a greater unfoldment was to come.

Trivial Breath (1928) is the work of a poet in transition. At times the craftsman is uppermost; at times the creative genius. A preoccupation with her material obscures the half-uttered wisdom. Many of the verses, steeped in literature, pay homage to the letter; a smaller number, less absorbed in shaping an immaculate phrase, do reverence to the spirit. Mrs. Wylie recognized the danger of her own exquisiteness, of a style where elegance was too often a richly embroidered cloak draped upon a neat triviality. In "Minotaur" she admonished herself:

> Go study to disdain
> The frail, the overfine
> That tapers to a line
> Knotted about the brain.

Her distrust of the "overfine" deepened; in the summer of 1928 she wrote, with breathless certainty, those verses which compose her posthumous and finest volume. The day before her sudden death, she selected and arranged that last book with extraordinary prescience. She died December 16, 1928.

Angels and Earthly Creatures (1928) is the sublimation of all her gifts. Here are the cunningly poised and polished syllables,

here are the old concerns with freezing silvers, frail china and pearly monotones, but here is a quality which lifts them high above themselves. Still indebted to the Jacobean metaphysicians, the poet transcends her influences and develops a highly personal mysticism. To say that her emotion is governed and disciplined is not to say that *Angels and Earthly Creatures* suffers from a lack of emotion. On the contrary, the sequence of nineteen sonnets has the spontaneity of a passionate improvisation, of something close to abandonment. The other poems share this intensity. "This Corruptible" is both visionary and philosophic; "O Virtuous Light" deals with that piercing clarity, the intuition which disturbs the senses, threatens reason and, "begotten of itself," unreconciled to ordinary experience, is "not a light by which to live." The other poems are scarcely less uplifted, finding their summit in "Hymn to Earth," which is possibly the deepest of her poems and one which is certain to endure. It was, as it happened, a clear premonition; it remains a noble valedictory. "The Pebble" (not to be found in any of her books) is spiritual autobiography that is immediate and universal. She could go no further. She had perfected her technique; without discarding her idiom, her spirit reached toward a final expression. She had suddenly attained the emotional stature of a great poet.

Though more mannered than her verse, her prose was scarcely less accomplished. *Jennifer Lorn* (1923), subtitled "A Sedate Extravaganza," *The Venetian Glass Nephew* (1925), *The Orphan Angel* (1926), *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard* (1928) adroitly juggle a harlequin style. Differing widely from each other in plots, ranging from macabre artifice to an apocryphal legend of Shelley in America, the manipulation is always deft and the iridescent language could only spring from an unusually "jeweled" brain.

But it is as a poet that Elinor Wylie will live longest. The intellectual ardor is finally reënforced by spiritual strength, insuring duration to work which "preserves a shape utterly its own."

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

MADMAN'S SONG

Better to see your cheek grown hollow,
Better to see your temple worn,
Than to forget to follow, follow,
After the sound of a silver horn.

Better to bind your brow with willow
And follow, follow until you die,
Than to sleep with your head on a golden pillow,
Nor lift it up when the hunt goes by.

Better to see your cheek grown sallow
And your hair grown gray, so soon, so soon,
Than to forget to hallo, hallo,
After the milk-white hounds of the moon.

SANCTUARY

This is the bricklayer; hear the thud
Of his heavy load dumped down on stone.
His lustrous bricks are brighter than blood,
His smoking mortar whiter than bone.

Set each sharp-edged, fire-bitten brick
Straight by the plumb-line's shivering length;
Make my marvelous wall so thick
Dead nor living may shake its strength.

Full as a crystal cup with drink
Is my cell with dreams, and quiet, and cool. . . .
Stop, old man! You must leave a chink;
How can I breathe? *You can't, you fool!*

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
  In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
  At a tranquil pace,
  Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
  And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
  More beautiful
  Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
  In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
  Upon silver fleece,
  Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
  Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
  On white silence below.
  We shall walk in the snow.

ESCAPE

When foxes eat the last gold grape,
And the last white antelope is killed,
I shall stop fighting and escape
Into a little house I'll build.

But first I'll shrink to fairy size,
With a whisper no one understands,
Making blind moons of all your eyes,
And muddy roads of all your hands.

And you may grope for me in vain
In hollows under the mangrove root,
Or where, in apple-scented rain,
The silver wasp-nests hang like fruit.

GOLDEN BOUGH

These lovely groves of fountain-trees that shake
A burning spray against autumnal cool,
Descend again in molten drops to make
The rutted path a river and a pool.

They rise in silence, fall in quietude,
Lie still as looking-glass to every sense;
Only their lion-color in the wood
Roars to miraculous heat and turbulence.

AUGUST

Why should this Negro insolently stride
Down the red noonday on such noiseless feet?
Piled in his barrow, tawnier than wheat,
Lie heaps of smoldering daisies, somber-eyed,
Their copper petals shriveled up with pride,
Hot with a superfluity of heat,
Like a great brazier borne along the street
By captive leopards, black and burning pied.

Are there no water-lilies, smooth as cream,
With long stems dripping crystal? Are there none
Like those white lilies, luminous and cool,
Plucked from some hemlock-darkened northern stream
By fair-haired swimmers, diving where the sun
Scarce warms the surface of the deepest pool?

SONNET

Down to the Puritan marrow of my bones
There's something in this richness that I hate.
I love the look, austere, immaculate,
Of landscapes drawn in pearly monotones.
There's something in my very blood that owns
Bare hills, cold silver on a sky of slate,
A thread of water, churned to milky spate
Streaming through slanted pastures fenced with stones.

I love those skies, thin blue or snowy gray,
Those fields sparse-planted, rendering meager sheaves;
That spring, briefer than apple-blossom's breath,
Summer, so much too beautiful to stay,
Swift autumn, like a bonfire of leaves,
And sleepy winter, like the sleep of death.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

My body is weary to death of my mischievous brain;
I am weary forever and ever of being brave;
Therefore I crouch on my knees while the cool white rain
Curves the clover over my head like a wave.

The stem and the frosty seed of the grass are ripe;
I have devoured their strength: I have drunk them deep;
And the dandelion is gall in a thin green pipe,
But the clover is honey and sun and the smell of sleep.

LET NO CHARITABLE HOPE

Now let no charitable hope
Confuse my mind with images
Of eagle and of antelope;
I am in nature none of these.

I was, being human, born alone;
I am, being woman, hard beset;
I live by squeezing from a stone
The little nourishment I get.

In masks outrageous and austere
The years go by in single file;
But none has merited my fear,
And none has quite escaped my smile.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

I lack the braver mind
That dares to find
The lover friend, and kind.

I fear him to the bone;
I lie alone
By the beloved one,

And, breathless for suspense,
Erect defense
Against love's violence

Whose silences portend
A bloody end
For lover never friend.

But, in default of faith,
In futile breath,
I dream no ill of Death.

"DESOLATION IS A DELICATE THING"

Sorrow lay upon my breast more heavily than winter clay
Lying ponderable upon the unmoving bosom of the dead;
Yet it was dissolved like a thin snowfall; it was softly withered away;
Presently like a single drop of dew it had trembled and fled.

This sorrow, which seemed heavier than a shovelful of loam,
Was gone like water, like a web of delicate frost;
It was silent and vanishing like smoke; it was scattered like foam;
Though my mind should desire to preserve it, nevertheless it is lost.

This sorrow was not like sorrow; it was shining and brief;
Even as I waked and was aware of its going, it was past and gone;
It was not earth; it was no more than a light leaf,
Or a snowflake in spring, which perishes upon stone.

This sorrow was small and vulnerable and short-lived;
It was neither earth nor stone; it was silver snow
Fallen from heaven, perhaps; it has not survived
An hour of the sun; it is sad it should be so.

This sorrow, which I believed a gravestone over my heart,
Is gone like a cloud; it eluded me as I woke;
Its crystal dust is suddenly broken and blown apart;
It was not my heart; it was this poor sorrow alone which broke.

PETER AND JOHN

Twelve good friends
Walked under the leaves
Binding the ends
Of the barley sheaves.

Peter and John
Lay down to sleep
Pillowed upon
A haymaker's heap.

John and Peter
Lay down to dream.
The air was sweeter
Than honey and cream.

Peter was bred
In the salty cold.
His hair was red
And his eyes were gold.

John had a mouth
Like a wing bent down.
His brow was smooth
And his eyes were brown.

Peter to slumber
Sank like a stone,
Of all their number
The bravest one.

John more slowly
Composed himself,
Young and holy
Among the Twelve.

John as he slept
Cried out in grief,
Turned and wept
On the golden leaf:

"Peter, Peter,
Stretch me your hand
Across the glitter
Of the harvest land!

"Peter, Peter,
Give me a sign!
This was a bitter
Dream of mine,—

"Bitter as aloes
It parched my tongue.
Upon the gallows
My life was hung.

"Sharp it seemed
As a bloody sword.
Peter, I dreamed
I was Christ the Lord!"

Peter turned
To holy Saint John:
His body burned
In the falling sun.

In the falling sun
He burned like flame:
"John, Saint John,
I have dreamed the same!

"My bones were hung
On an elder tree;
Bells were rung
Over Galilee.

"A silver penny
Sealed each of my eyes.
Many and many
A cock crew thrice."

When Peter's word
Was spoken and done,
"Were you Christ the Lord
In your dream?" said John.

"No," said the other,
"That I was not.
I was our brother
Iscariot."

BIRTHDAY SONNET

Take home Thy prodigal child, O Lord of Hosts!
Protect the sacred from the secular danger;
Advise her, that Thou never needst avenge her;
Marry her mind neither to man's nor ghost's
Nor holier domination's, if the costs
Of such commingling should transport or change her;
Defend her from familiar and stranger,
And earth's and air's contagions and rusts.

Instruct her strictly to preserve Thy gift
And alter not its grain in atom sort;
Angels may wed her to their ultimate hurt
And men embrace a specter in a shift
So that no drop of the pure spirit fall
Into the dust; defend Thy prodigal.

O VIRTUOUS LIGHT

A private madness has prevailed
Over the pure and valiant mind;
The instrument of reason failed
And the star-gazing eyes struck blind.

Sudden excess of light has wrought
Confusion in the secret place
Where the slow miracles of thought
Take shape through patience into grace.

Mysterious as steel and flint
The birth of this destructive spark
Whose inward growth has power to print
Strange suns upon the natural dark.

O break the walls of sense in half
And make the spirit fugitive!
This light begotten of itself
Is not a light by which to live!

The fire of farthing tallow dips
Dispels the menace of the skies
So it illuminate the lips
And enter the discerning eyes.

O virtuous light, if thou be man's
Or matter of the meteor stone,
Prevail against this radiance
Which is engendered of its own!

THE PEBBLE

If any have a stone to shy,
Let him be David and not I;
The lovely shepherd, brave and vain,
Who has a maggot in the brain,
Which, since the brain is bold and pliant,
Takes the proportions of a giant.
Alas, my legendary fate!
Who sometimes rage, but never hate.

Long, long before the pebble flieth
I see a virtue in Goliath;
Yea, in the Philistine his face,
A touching majesty and grace;
Then like the lights of evening shine
The features of the Philistine
Until my spirit faints to see
The beauty of my enemy.
If any have a stone to fling
Let him be a shepherd-king,
Who is himself so beautiful
He may detest the gross and dull
With holy rage and heavenly pride
To make a pebble sanctified
And feather its course with wings of scorn.
But, from the day that I was born
Until like corn I bow to the sickle,
I am in hatred false and fickle.
I am most cruel to any one
Who hates me with devotion;
I will not freeze, I will not burn;
I make his heart a poor return
For all the passion that he spends
In swearing we shall never be friends;
For all the pains his passion spent
In hatred I am impotent;
The sad perversity of my mind
Sees in him my kin and kind.
Alas, my shameful heritage,
False in hate and fickle in rage!
Alas, to lack the power to loathe!
I like them each; I love them both;
Philistine and shepherd-king
They strike the pebble from my sling;
My heart grows cold, my spirit grows faint;
Behold, a hero and a saint
Where appeared, a moment since,
A giant and a heathen prince;
And I am bound and given over
To be no better than a lover,

Alas, who strove as a holy rebel!
They have broke my sling and stole my pebble:
If any have a stone to throw
It is not I, ever or now.

HYMN TO EARTH

Farewell, incomparable element,
Whence man arose, where he shall not return;
And hail, imperfect urn
Of his last ashes, and his firstborn fruit;
Farewell, the long pursuit,
And all the adventures of his discontent;
The voyages which sent
His heart averse from home:
Metal of clay, permit him that he come
To thy slow-burning fire as to a hearth;
Accept him as a particle of earth.

Fire, being divided from the other three,
It lives removed, or secret at the core;
Most subtle of the four,
When air flies not, nor water flows,
It disembodied goes,
Being light, elixir of the first decree,
More volatile than he;
With strength and power to pass
Through space, where never his least atom was:
He has no part in it, save as his eyes
Have drawn its emanation from the skies.

A wingless creature heavier than air,
He is rejected of its quintessence;
Coming and going hence,
In the twin minutes of his birth and death,
He may inhale as breath,
As breath relinquish heaven's atmosphere,
Yet in it have no share,
Nor can survive therein
Where its outer edge is filtered pure and thin:
It doth but lend its crystal to his lungs
For his early crying, and his final songs.

The element of water has denied
Its child; it is no more his element;
It never will relent;
Its silver harvests are more sparsely given
Than the rewards of heaven,
And he shall drink cold comfort at its side:
The water is too wide:
The sewmew and the gull
Feather a nest made soft and pitiful
Upon its foam; he has not any part
In the long swell of sorrow at its heart.

Hail and farewell, beloved element,
Whence he departed, and his parent once;
See where thy spirit runs
Which for so long hath had the moon to wife;
Shall this support his life
Until the arches of the waves be bent
And grow shallow and spent?
Wisely it cast him forth
With his dead weight of burdens nothing worth,
Leaving him, for the universal years,
A little seawater to make his tears.

Hail, element of earth, receive thy own,
And cherish, at thy charitable breast,
This man, this mongrel beast:
He plows the sand, and, at his hardest need,
He sows himself for seed;
He plows the furrow, and in this lies down
Before the corn is grown;
Between the apple bloom
And the ripe apple is sufficient room
In time, and matter, to consume his love
And make him parcel of a cypress grove.

Receive him as thy lover for an hour
Who will not weary, by a longer stay,
The kind embrace of clay;
Even within thine arms he is dispersed
To nothing, as at first;

The air flings downward from its four-quartered tower
Him whom the flames devour;
At the full tide, at the flood,
The sea is mingled with his salty blood:
The traveler dust, although the dust be vile,
Sleeps as thy lover for a little while.

FRANK ERNEST HILL

Frank Ernest Hill was born in San Jose, California, October 29, 1888. He graduated from Stanford University, taught at the University of Illinois, Stanford University and Columbia Extension. During the War, he went into the Air Service, and after a brief experience with the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Corporation, engaged in journalism and publishing. In collaboration with Joseph Auslander, he wrote *The Wingèd Horse* (1927), which is a story rather than a criticism of poetry, and edited *The Wingèd Horse Anthology* (1929).

Stone Dust (1928) is a volume which presents the clash between the mechanical and creative forces in modern civilization. Neither scorning nor sentimentalizing the machine, Hill appraises it in terms of inner as well as outer experience. "Upper Air," "Wing Harbor," and the three other aeroplane poems are verses—possibly the first—by one who has known flying intimately; they transcend physical sensation, registering effects on spirit. The two longer poems, of which "Earth and Air" is the better, pierce through the material with clear vision. It is interesting to compare "Earth and Air"—particularly its point of view—with the preceding apostrophe: Elinor Wylie's "Hymn to Earth."

EARTH AND AIR

I

Earth is the tower of granite, the floor of loam,
The grass that seeds, the sheep that fatten for men,
Shapes that are beaten in fire or built in wall,
The plow preparing the soil to be born again;
The crystal well, the gold of the honeycomb,
The hands that pattern with wool or hide or clay;
Earth is the wain, the sickle, the sledge, the stall—
Earth is our yesterday.

II

Air is the thrust of steam and burning gas,
The spark men take from the foam of a falling stream,
The word of the first sea caught on the last of the seven,
Ships with the speed of a dream made more than dream;
The throb of steel in a cage of steel and glass,
Iron fingers at smooth and gleaming play,
Air is the wings of men on the sea of heaven—
Air is today.

III

Earth is the suck of men, their loaf and their healing;
With earth they are poor but sapful, driven but strong;
Air is a high, thin world where their eyes grow weaker,
Their round breasts flatten, their cheeks fall white and long.
Air is a shifting floor and a viewless ceiling,
Genii building and wrecking and building again,
It is a half-heard magic speech from a hidden speaker
Sounding through light and rain.

IV

Men with the vision of air went planning and building;
They dreamed of slaves of iron and wrought their slaves;
They envied the wind and the eagle and spread their wings
Above the shadow of sinking woods and waves.
Men made little suns for the midnight's gilding,
Bridged with their wires the bridgeless gap of seas;
They dulled the teeth of winter, they turned the stings
And withering of disease—

V

Men with the dream of air have climbed to their vision,
But now they are faint for the meat of a day gone by;
The steeds of the sun race on in a golden madness,
The hurtling drivers are pale in the height of the sky.
Some say: "Hard Fate in a wrath and a great derision
Has laid the tools of gods in the hands of men;
Can dust breed stars? Can tears be distilled to gladness?
Let us go to earth again!"

VI

But the many hear not, the millions follow their dreaming
Driving their iron cattle on stone or steel,
Flying their iron hawks on an airy ocean,
Bearing children that play with the spark and the wheel.
They will never turn from swiftness and silver gleaming
Or the sense that he who has taken in wheel or rod
The staff of gods and the magic of god-like motion
Himself shall become a god.

VII

Perhaps they will come again to the sun and the bough,
The wind and the clod that once were their strife and their fare;
They will take not of olden beauty or olden toil;
They will only come back to earth when earth is air:
When they girdle peaks with their pavements and send their plow
Like a whirl of wind, and store their snow and their sun,
And sow where the strength they have sifted into the soil
Yields five instead of one.

VIII

Look back, then, you who had love for earth and regret her,
And mourn a change that harries your hill and sky;
For men are turned from the peace of the scythe and candle;
Their eyes are fierce for the bright and the swift and the high.
They have wrecked a world for the leaping dream of a better,
And gone from peace toward a peace beyond a war,
They have mounted untrodden stairs to a key and a handle
That open a door.

UPPER AIR

High, pale, imperial places of slow cloud
And windless wells of sunlit silence. . . . Sense
Of some aware, half-scornful Permanence
Past which we flow like water that is loud

A moment on the granite. Nothing here
Beats with the pulse that beat in us below;
That was a flame; this is the soul of snow
Immortalized in moveless atmosphere.

Yet we shall brood upon this haunt of wings
When love, like perfume washed away in rain,
Dies on the years. Still we shall come again,
Seeking the clouds as we have sought the sea,
Asking the peace of these immortal things
That will not mix with our mortality.

T. S. ELIOT

T. S. (Thomas Stearns) Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He received his A.B. at Harvard in 1909 and his A.M. in 1910. Subsequently, he studied at the Sorbonne and at Merton College, Oxford, becoming a teacher and lecturer in London, where he has lived (although he no longer teaches) since 1914. He was, for a while, assistant editor of *The Egoist* and is at present the leading spirit of *The Criterion*, a magazine which he helped to found.

Prufrock appeared in England in 1917. An American edition, including a number of other verses, was published under the title *Poems* in 1920. It was hailed, reviled, applauded, misunderstood and imitated. There were indeed many imitators, particularly in England, where the younger men, rebounding from Georgian affectations, seized upon Eliot's disillusioned subtleties as a new gospel. Most of them patterned their lines upon the now famous "Sweeney" model, and by 1922 Eliot was one of the most discussed and disputed of living American poets. This volume, *Poems*, contains two sharply differentiated though related idioms. The more arresting and, therefore, the more copied evocations are the impressionistic sets of quatrains that compose "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," "Sweeney Erect," "The Hippopotamus" (that stinging whimsicality), "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service." It is a witty if recondite inflection which is heard beneath the muffled allusions; the edged lines crackle with observations as shrewd as "the snarled and yelping seas," "this oval O cropped out with teeth," "laughter tinkling among the teacups," "the damp souls of housemaids." Occasionally his wit takes on a darker intensity, as when, speaking of Donne's struggle to transcend the senses, he writes:

He knew the anguish of the marrow,
The ague of the skeleton;
No contact possible to flesh
Allayed the fever of the bone.

Broadly summarized, however, about half of the sixty-three pages of Eliot's *Poems* attains a level little higher than that of acrid epigrams, mordant and complicated *vers de société*. But there is another phase of Eliot, one that is disclosed in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Portrait of a Lady," and "La Figlia Che Piange," in which picture, philosophy and music are surprisingly blended. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," written while Eliot was still at Harvard, is a minor masterpiece; nothing in recent poetry (if we forget Laforgue and the other French poets to whom Eliot is manifestly indebted), nothing in English at least, has communicated so great a sense of ambiguous hurt and general frustration. More condensed and equally precise in its hyperesthetic delicacy is "The Portrait of a Lady," that analytical study of the feminine dilettante, the faded votary of dimly lit studios—a baffled *précieuse* diffusing small talk and boredom. In these poems as well as the succeeding one, Eliot becomes the laureate of nostalgia, of a dwindling and futile *Wehmut*.

The Waste Land (1922) is Eliot's attempt to sound this theme of disillusion-frustration on a large scale by combining or rather colliding his two styles. The publication of this forty-page poem caused an outburst so violent and prolonged that the echoes of the controversy hung in the air for several years. On the one hand it was dismissed as "an impudent hoax," "filthy bedlam raving"; on the other it was exalted as "the greatest document of our day, showing the starvation of our entire civilization." Both estimates are, of course, absurd; *The Waste Land* is neither "erudite gibberish" nor is it "a great work, with one triumph after another." It is, in essence, a set of mangled, difficult and (in spite of the arbitrary program of unification) separate failures and successes. If its pages are splintered with broken phrases and distorted pictures, one must remember that Eliot is attempting to portray disintegration itself. Its dependence on associations in other literatures makes it seem like an anthology of assimilations; its jumble of quotations (without inverted commas) from thirty-one sources gives the entire structure the look of a piece of literary carpentry done by a scholarly joiner. But certain passages are quick with poignance; several episodes are unforgettably etched. Clive Bell wrote, "The despairing tone which pervades Eliot's poetry is not, it seems to me, so much the despair of disillusionment as the morbidity of *The Yellow Book*." But, having quoted Bell, in derogation I should let him add, "But how the man can write! And

the experience, if it be small, is perfectly digested and assimilated; it has gone into the blood and bones of his work. By his choice of words, by his forging of phrases, by his twisting, stretching and snapping of rhythms, Eliot can make out of his narrow vision things of perpetual beauty."

The "things of perpetual beauty" are few and far to seek in *The Waste Land*, but they are there. And, if the rare felicities are difficult to find, we must remember that much which was once considered ugly and unintelligible—one recalls Beethoven's symphonies, Whistler's canvases, Rodin's bronzes, Browning's monologues, Whitman's "barbaric yawp"—much which our grandparents considered heretical and outrageous has become part of the world's cultural tradition. To dislike Eliot's work because it is obscure is to admit an honest prejudice; to say that Eliot is a charlatan is to repeat the charge that Wagner wrote "Tristan and Isolde" merely to irritate the critics.

Eliot is quick to admit his influences. Reviewing Peter Quennell's *Baudelaire and the Symbolists* in 1930 he refers to Arthur Symons' *Symbolist Movement in Literature*, saying, "I myself owe Mr. Symons a great debt. But for having read his book I should not, in the year 1908, have heard of Laforgue and Rimbaud; I should probably not have begun to read Verlaine; and but for reading Verlaine, I should not have heard of Corbière. So the Symons book is one of those which have affected the course of my life." But, as Edmund Wilson points out, though Eliot's main theme (the inferiority of the present to the past) is found in Laforgue and the other Romantics, though the idea of juxtaposing many literatures and a medley of idioms was suggested by Pound, "yet Eliot manages to be most effective precisely where he might be expected to be least original—he succeeds in conveying his meanings, in communicating his emotions, in spite of all his learning or mysterious allusions, and whether we understand them or not. . . . He has been able to lend even to the rhythms, to the words themselves, of his great predecessors a new music and a new meaning."

Since *The Waste Land* Eliot's occasional poems appeared in separate pamphlets, each poem emphasizing the author's depth of observation and horror of a world which has nothing stronger to lean on than hollow despair. Finding fault with Eliot's attitude, Henry Newbolt (in *New Paths on Helicon*) wrote, "It is a lamentable thing to hear so despairing a voice in the hour of our anxiety. . . . But it is still more lamentable that the assurance of our hopelessness should be conveyed to us in so trivial a manner. These contrasts should be crushing, but they are too clever for that; these ironies should be tragic, but they are hardly more

than jeers." What Newbolt failed to see was Eliot's intention, which was not to console but rather to condemn. Newbolt was likewise in error in assuming (1) that all Eliot's ironies were conveyed in a trivial manner and (2) that when they were so conveyed, they were not less but more tragic because of their seeming flippancy of utterance. This essential seriousness was fortified by the publication of *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1929), the general point of view being that of a "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion." The volume as a whole is a complete disproof of the charge of cynical unconcern; here is no jeering detachment. Eliot insists not only on the necessity of ideas but on the need of ideals, saying explicitly, in an essay pointing out the deficiencies of the Humanism of Irving Babbitt, "If you mean a spiritual and intellectual coördination on a high level, then it is doubtful whether civilization can endure without religion, and religion without a church."

Besides his poetry, Eliot has published four books of essays: *The Sacred Wood* (1921), *Homage to John Dryden* (1924), *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1929), which has already been referred to, and *Dante* (1930), an introduction to the appreciation of Dante's work as a whole. These volumes establish Eliot as the most provocative and perhaps the most important critic of literature now writing in English. Wholly unlike his verse, sometimes academic, sometimes marred by fantastic theories, Eliot's criticism is persuasive and backed by authority. Though his writing lacks bulk, it does not lack profundity. Intensified by learning, sharpened by original apprehensions, his work has exercised an incalculable influence on his times.

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE

O quam te memorem virgo . . .

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—
Lean on a garden urn—
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—
Fling them to the ground and turn
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes:
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,
So I would have had her stand and grieve,
So he would have left

As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,
As the mind deserts the body it has used.

I should find
Some way incomparably light and deft,
Some way we both should understand,
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather
Compelled my imagination many days,
Many days and many hours:
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers,
And I wonder how they should have been together!
I should have lost a gesture and a pose.
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question. . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall

Beneath the music from a farther room.
So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
And should I then presume?
And how should I begin?

. . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

. . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
    Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
    That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail
    along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a
    screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
    "That is not it at all,
    That is not what I meant, at all."

. . . . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old. . . . I grow old. . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

MORNING AT THE WINDOW

They are rattling breakfast plates in basement kitchens,
And along the trampled edges of the street
I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids
Sprouting despondently at area gates.

The brown waves of fog toss up to me
Twisted faces from the bottom of the street,
And tear from a passer-by with muddy skirts
An aimless smile that hovers in the air
And vanishes along the level of the roofs.

PRELUDE

The winter evening settles down
With smells of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about his feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY[1]

I

Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon
You have the scene arrange itself—as it will seem to do—
With "I have saved this afternoon for you";
And four wax candles in the darkened room,
Four rings of light upon the ceiling overhead,
And atmosphere of Juliet's tomb
Prepared for all the things to be said, or left unsaid.
We have been, let us say, to hear the latest Pole
Transmit the Preludes, through his hair and finger-tips.
"So intimate, this Chopin, that I think his soul
Should be resurrected only among friends
Some two or three, who will not touch the bloom
That is rubbed and questioned in the concert room."
—And so the conversation slips
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets
Through attenuated tones of violins
Mingled with remote cornets
And begins.
"You do not know how much they mean to me, my friends,
And how, how rare and strange it is, to find
In a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends
(For indeed I do not love it . . . you knew? You are not
blind!
How keen you are!)
To find a friend who has these qualities,
Who has, and gives
Those qualities upon which friendship lives.
How much it means that I say this to you—
Without these friendships—life, what *cauchemar!*"
Among the windings of the violins
And the ariettes
Of cracked cornets
Inside my brain a dull tom-tom begins
Absurdly hammering a prelude of its own,
Capricious monotone
That is at least one definite "false note."
—Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance,

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 436.

Admire the monuments
Discuss the late events,
Correct our watches by the public clocks.
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks.

II

Now that lilacs are in bloom
She has a bowl of lilacs in her room
And twists one in her fingers while she talks.
"Ah, my friend, you do not know, you do not know
What life is, you should hold it in your hands";
(Slowly twisting the lilac stalks)
"You let it flow from you, you let it flow,
And youth is cruel, and has no remorse
And smiles at situations which it cannot see."

I smile, of course,
And go on drinking tea.
"Yet with these April sunsets, that somehow recall
My buried life, and Paris in the Spring,
I feel immeasurably at peace, and find the world
To be wonderful and youthful, after all."

The voice returns like the insistent out-of-tune
Of a broken violin on an August afternoon:
"I am always sure that you understand
My feelings, always sure that you feel,
Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand.
You are invulnerable, you have no Achilles' heel.
You will go on, and when you have prevailed
You can say: at this point many a one has failed.

"But what have I, but what have I, my friend,
To give you, what can you receive from me?
Only the friendship and the sympathy
Of one about to reach her journey's end.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends. . . ."

I take my hat: how can I make a cowardly amends
For what she has said to me?

You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and the sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage.
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance,
Another bank defaulter has confessed.
I keep my countenance,
I remain self-possessed
Except when a street piano, mechanical and tired,
Reiterates some worn-out common song
With the smell of hyacinths across the garden,
Recalling things that other people have desired.
Are these ideas right or wrong?

III

The October night comes down; returning as before
Except for a slight sensation of being ill at ease
I mount the stairs and turn the handle of the door
And feel as if I had mounted on my hands and knees.

"And so you are going abroad; and when do you return?
But that's a useless question.
You hardly know when you are coming back;
You will find so much to learn."
My smile falls heavily among the bric-à-brac.

"Perhaps you can write to me."
My self-possession flares up for a second;
This is as I had reckoned.
"I have been wondering frequently of late
(But our beginnings never know our ends!)
Why we have not developed into friends."
I feel like one who smiles, and turning shall remark
Suddenly, his expression in a glass.
My self-possession gutters; we are really in the dark.

"For everybody said so, all our friends,
They all were sure our feelings would relate
So closely! I myself can hardly understand.
We must leave it now to fate.
You will write, at any rate.

Perhaps it is not too late.
I shall sit here, serving tea to friends."

And I must borrow every changing shape
To find expression . . . dance, dance
Like a dancing bear,
Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape. . . .
Let us take the air, in a tobacco trance—
Well! and what if she should die some afternoon,
Afternoon gray and smoky, evening yellow and rose;
Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand
With the smoke coming down above the housetops;
Doubtful, for quite a while
Not knowing what to feel or if I understand
Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .
Would she not have the advantage, after all?
This music is successful with a "dying fall"
Now that we talk of dying—
And should I have the right to smile?

CONVERSATION GALANTE

I observe: "Our sentimental friend, the moon!
Or possibly (fantastic, I confess)
It may be Prester John's balloon
Or an old battered lantern hung aloft
To light poor travelers to their distress."
She then: "How you digress!"

And I then: "Some one frames upon the keys
That exquisite nocturne, with which we explain
The night and moonshine; music which we seize
To body forth our vacuity."
She then: "Does this refer to me?"
"Oh, no, it is I who am inane.

"You, madam, are the eternal humorist,
The eternal enemy of the absolute,
Giving our vagrant moods the slightest twist!
With your aid indifferent and imperious
At a stroke our mad poetics to confute—"
And—"Are we then so serious?"

GERONTION

Thou hast nor youth nor age
But as it were an after dinner sleep
Dreaming of both.

Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh, heaving a cutlass,
Bitten by flies, fought.
My house is a decayed house,
And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner,
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.
The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.

I an old man,
A dull head among windy spaces.

Signs are taken for wonders. "We would see a sign":
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness. In the juvescence of the year
Came Christ the tiger

In depraved May, dogwood and chestnut, flowering judas,
To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk
Among whispers; by Mr. Silvero
With caressing hands, at Limoges
Who walked all night in the next room;
By Hakagawa, bowing among the Titians;
By Madame de Tornquist, in the dark room
Shifting the candles; Fräulein von Kulp
Who turned in the hall, one hand on the door. Vacant shuttles
Weave the wind. I have no ghosts,
An old man in a draughty house
Under a windy knob.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities. Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.
These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing tree.

The tiger springs in the new year. Us he devours. Think at last
We have not reached conclusion, when I
Stiffen in a rented house. Think at last
I have not made this show purposelessly
And it is not by any concitation
Of the backward devils.
I would meet you upon this honestly.
I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
How should I use it for your closer contact?

These with a thousand small deliberations
Protract the profit of their chilled delirium,
Excite the membrane, when the sense has cooled,
With pungent sauces, multiply variety
In a wilderness of mirrors. What will the spider do,
Suspend its operations, will the weevil
Delay? De Bailhache, Fresca, Mrs. Cammel, whirled
Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear
In fractured atoms. Gull against the wind, in the windy straits
Of Belle Isle, or running on the Horn,

White feathers in the snow, the Gulf claims,
And an old man driven by the Trades
To a sleepy corner.

Tenants of the house,
Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season.

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

John Crowe Ransom was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, April 30, 1888, of Scotch-Irish descent. Pulaski, so Ransom informs me, is otherwise distinguished as being the County Seat of Giles County, the birthplace of Sam Davis, the Confederate martyr, and of the Ku Klux Klan—Ransom's own great-uncle taking part in the foundation of the latter. Ransom, the son of a local minister, was educated in his own state and abroad: he received his B.A. at Vanderbilt University in 1909, his B.A. at Oxford in 1923. At the latter he was Rhodes Scholar from Tennessee, taking the "Greats" (classical) course. He has taught at Vanderbilt since 1914, except for two years during which he was with the A.E.F. He was the chief instigator and one of the founders of *The Fugitive*, that bravely experimental journal which did much to disprove Mencken's contention that the "solid South" was a vast "Sahara of the Beaux Arts."

Poems About God appeared in 1919, a raw first book with a tang of bitter humor. Here was no southern gentleman's proverbial courtliness, no unctuous and mincing gallantry; here was a bristling acerbity blurted in a strong if uncertain utterance. The lines range from the roughly powerful (reminding one of a coarser Robert Frost) to the surprisingly banal. During the five-year interval between *Poems About God* and his next volume, Ransom's poetry underwent an almost complete change. Little of the crudeness remains in *Chills and Fever*, by all odds the most distinguished volume of poetry published in 1924. Ransom, it was evident, reacted from the callow simplicities and the tradition of Wonder in words of one syllable; his verse is definitely for mature minds willing not only to allow a mature poet his mixed modes

but willing to follow them. It is, at first glance, a curiously involved speech which Ransom uses to clothe his semi-whimsical, semi-ironic philosophy. But beneath his prim and too precise circumlocutions one is made aware of an extraordinarily sensitive lyricist. What adds zest to his verses is the mocking gravity of his speech—a gravity which is sometimes exaggerated to the verge of parody, if a philosopher can achieve that dubious art.

Ransom strikes his note with a sureness that is almost defiant. He can weave patterns that are, at one time, fanciful and learned. His account of a small boy's walk in deep woods ("First Travels of Max") is as fine a macabre piece as anything achieved by Amy Lowell. He can draw portraits of dream-lost mediocrities as sympathetically as Robinson, "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son" being a second cousin to "Miniver Cheevy" and "Bewick Finzer." He can sound the mordant brasses in "Captain Carpenter," the muted violins in "Here Lies a Lady" and the prophetic trumpets in "Spiel of the Three Mountebanks" with equal precision. Such music, half soothing, half stinging, is new in our poetry; the modulations are strange, the cadences charming in their slight irregularities. Ransom knows how to employ the unresolved suspension; he delights in pairing such slant rhymes as "drunkard-conquered," "little-scuttle," "ready-study." But it is not merely the free use of dissonance and assonance which distinguishes his poems; it is what he does with these properties. "Antique Harvesters" breathes the very quixotic spirit of the old South and the Southron's devotion to that spirit; "Lady Lost" is a perfect harmonizing of teasing and tenderness.

Two Gentlemen in Bonds (1927) has the fresh combination of cavalier grace and surprising savagery uttered in a precise softness of speech. But the surprise is not only occasioned by his tempo which is both nervous and drawling. As Mark Van Doren wrote, "He has been at pains to salt his rhymes and pepper his diction with fresh, realistic words; he has wrenched his cadences to fit his wayward thought; he has written with an original and almost acid gayety."

And yet, for all of Ransom's variety, in spite of his ability to play equally well in the spangles of harlequin and the graver habit of *Kapellmeister*, this Southerner will never be a popular poet. His is too elegant a speech to meet with general favor; his vocabulary is meticulous to the point of being over-elaborate, his utterance is so precise as to seem pedantic. The fact that a great part of this particularity is not affectation, but a scholar's gentle mockery, will not save him from the disapproval or the neglect of the public which dreads polysyllabic poets.

Nevertheless, even in a facile, overproductive age, there can be

no doubt that these crisp narratives and cerebral lyrics will, in spite of their allusive idiom, find their niche. It will be neither a mean nor a long neglected one. Ransom has already received recognition beyond the borders of patriotic poetry societies. In 1924 the Hogarth Press (London) published *Grace After Meat*, an assembling of ten poems from *Poems About God* and the same number from *Chills and Fever*. It was sponsored by T. S. Eliot and introduced by Robert Graves, who ended his foreword by saying, "Ransom is doing for his own state what Frost has done for New England, Vachel Lindsay for his Middle West, Carl Sandburg for Chicago. Such poets are the forerunners of a national American school that will one day produce a synthesis of all regional contributions." One does not have to echo all of the English writer's prophecy to accord Ransom his distinct and autochthonous place.

BELLS FOR JOHN WHITESIDES' DAUGHTER

There was such speed in her little body,
And such lightness in her footfall,
It is no wonder that her brown study
Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
We looked among orchard trees and beyond,
Where she took arms against her shadow,
Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
Dripping their snow on the green grass,
Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
Lady with rod that made them rise
From their noon apple-dreams, and scuttle
Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready;
In one house we are sternly stopped
To say we are vexed at her brown study,
Lying so primly propped.

SPIEL OF THE THREE MOUNTEBANKS

THE SWARTHY ONE—
Villagers who gather round,
This is Fides, my lean hound.
Bring your bristled village curs
To try his fang and tooth, sweet sirs:
He will rend them, he is savage,
Thinking nothing but to ravage,
Nor with cudgel, fire, rope,
May ye control my misanthrope;
He would tear the moon in the sky
And fly at Heaven, could he fly.
And for his ravening without cease
I have had of him no peace.
Only once I bared the knife
To quit my devil of his life,
But listen, how I heard him say,
"Think you I shall die today?
Since your mother cursed and died,
I am keeping at your side,
We are firmly knit together,
Two ends tugging at one tether,
And you shall see when I shall die
That you are mortal even as I."
Bring your stoutest-hearted curs
If ye would risk him, gentle sirs.

THE THICK ONE—
Countrymen, here's a noble frame,
Humphrey is my elephant's name.
When my father's back was bent
Under steep impediment,
Humphrey came to my possession,
With patient strength for all his passion.
Have ye a mountain to remove?
It is Humphrey's dearest love.
Pile his burden to the skies,
Loose a pestilence of flies,
Foot him in the quick morass
Where no laden beast can pass:

He will staunch his weariless back
And march unswerving on the track.
Have ye seen a back so wide,
Such impenetrable hide?
Nor think ye by this Humphrey hill
Prince Hamlet bare his fardels ill?
Myself I like it not for us
To wear beneath an incubus;
I take offense, but in no rage
May I dispose my heritage;
Though in good time the vast and tough
Shall sink and totter soon enough.
So pile your population up:
They are a drop in Humphrey's cup;
Add all your curses to his pack
To make one straw for Humphrey's back.

The Pale One—
If ye remark how poor I am,
Come, citizens, behold my lamb!
Have ye a lion, ounce, or scourge,
Or any beast of dainty gorge?
Agnus lays his tender youth
Between the very enemy's mouth,
And though he sniff his delicate meat,
He may not bruise that flesh nor eat,
He may not rend him limb from limb,
If Agnus do but bleat on him.
Fierce was my youth, but like a dream
I saw a temple, and a stream,
And where I knelt and washed my sore,
This infant lamb stood on the shore,
He mounted with me from the river.
And still he cries, as brave as ever,
"Lay me down by the lion's side
To match my frailty with his pride;
Fain would I welter in my blood
To teach these lions true lionhood."
So daily Agnus would be slain
But daily is denied again,

And still the hungry lions range
While Agnus waits upon a change;
Only the coursing lions die
And in their deserts mortify.
So bring us lion, leopard, bear,
To try of Agnus without fear,
And ye less gentle than I am,
Come, be instructed of my Lamb.

HERE LIES A LADY

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of three,
And of medicos marveling sweetly on her ills.

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads—
What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds—

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white and blown,
And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine.
The sixth of these states was her last; the cold settled down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope ye may thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and mourning,
In love and great honor we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

FIRST TRAVELS OF MAX

As hath been, lo, these many generations,
The best of the Van Vroomans was the youngest;
And even he, in a chevroned sailor's blouse
And tawny curls far from subdued to the cap,
Had slapped old Katie and betaken himself
From games for children. That was because they told
Him never, never to set a wicked foot
Into Fool's Forest, where the devil dwelt.

"Become Saint Michael's sword!" said Max to the stick,
And to the stone, "Be a brand-new revolver!"
Then Max was glad that he had armed so wisely,
As darker grew the wood, and shrill with silence.
All good fairies were helpless here; at night
Whipped in an inch of their lives; weeping, forbidden
To play with strange scared truant little boys
Who didn't belong there. Snakes were allowed there
And lizards and adders—people of age and evil
That lay on their bellies and whispered—no bird nor rabbit.
There were more rotten trees than there were sound ones;
In that wood, timber was degenerate
And rotted almost faster than it grew.
There were no flowers nor apples; too much age.
The only innocent thing in there was Max,
And even he had cursed his little sisters.

The little black tarn rose up almost in his face—
It was as black and sudden as the pit
The Adversary digs in the bowels of earth;
Bubbles were on it, breath of the black beast
(Formed like a spider, white bag for entrails)
Who took that sort of blackness to inhabit
And dangle after bad men in Fool's Forest.
"Must they be bad?" said casuistical Max.
"Mightn't a good boy who stopped saying his prayers
Be allowed to slip into the spider's fingers?"
Max raised his sword—but what can swords do
Against the Prince of the Dark? Max sheathed his point
And crept around the pool.

In the middle of the wood was a Red Witch.
Max half expected her. He never expected
To find a witch's house so dirty and foolish,
A witch with a wide bosom yellow as butter,
Or a witch combing so many obscene things
From her black hair into her scarlet lap.
He never believed there would attempt to sing
The one that taught the rats to squeal and Bashan's
Bull to bellow.

"Littlest and last Van Vrooman, do you come too?"
She knew him, it appeared, would know him better,
The scarlet hulk of hell with a fat bosom,
Pirouetting at the bottom of the forest.
Certainly Max had come, but he was going,
Unequal contests never being commanded
On young knights only armed in innocency.
"When I am a grown man I will come here
And cut your head off!" That was very well;
Not a true heart beating in Christendom
Could have said more, but that for the present would do.
Max went straight home; and nothing chilled him more
Than the company kept him by the witch's laugh
And the witch's song, and the creeping of his flesh.

Max is more firmly domiciliated.
A great house is Van Vrooman, a green slope
South to the sun do the great ones inhabit
And a few children play on the lawn with the nurse.
Max has returned to his play, and you may find him,
His famous curls unsmoothed, if you will call
Where the Van Vroomans live, the tribe Van Vrooman
Live there, at least, when any are at home.

LADY LOST

This morning, there flew up the lane
A timid lady-bird to our bird-bath
And eyed her image dolefully as death;
This afternoon, knocked on our windowpane
To be let in from the rain.

And when I caught her eye
She looked aside, but at the clapping thunder
And sight of the whole earth blazing up like tinder
Looked in on us again most miserably,
Indeed as if she would cry.

So I will go out into the park and say,
"Who has lost a delicate brown-eyed lady
In the West End Section? Or has anybody

Injured some fine woman in some dark way,
Last night or yesterday?

"Let the owner come and claim possession,
No questions will be asked. But stroke her gently
With loving words, and she will evidently
Resume her full soft-haired white-breasted fashion,
And her right home and her right passion."

ANTIQUE HARVESTERS

(*Scene: Of the Mississippi the bank sinister, and of the Ohio the bank sinister*)

Tawny are the leaves turned, but they still hold.
It is the harvest; what shall this land produce?
A meager hill of kernels, a runnel of juice.
Declension looks from our land, it is old.
Therefore let us assemble, dry, gray, spare,
And mild as yellow air.

"I hear the creak of a raven's funeral wing."
The young men would be joying in the song
Of passionate birds; their memories are not long.
What is it thus rehearsed in sable? "Nothing."
Trust not but the old endure, and shall be older
Than the scornful beholder.

We pluck the spindling ears and gather the corn.
One spot has special yield? "On this spot stood
Heroes and drenched it with their only blood."
And talk meets talk, as echoes from the horn
Of the hunter—echoes are the old men's arts,
Ample are the chambers of their hearts.

Here come the hunters, keepers of a rite.
The horn, the hounds, the lank mares coursing by
Under quaint archetypes of chivalry;
And the fox, lovely ritualist, in flight
Offering his unearthly ghost to quarry;
And the fields, themselves to harry.

Resume, harvesters. The treasure is full bronze
Which you will garner for the Lady, and the moon
Could tinge it no yellower than does this noon;
But the gray will quench it shortly—the fields, men, stones.
Pluck fast, dreamers; prove as you rumble slowly
Not less than men, not wholly.

Bare the arm too, dainty youths, bend the knees
Under bronze burdens. And by an autumn tone
As by a gray, as by a green, you will have known
Your famous Lady's image; for so have these.
And if one say that easily will your hands
More prosper in other lands,

Angry as wasp-music be your cry then:
"Forsake the Proud Lady, of the heart of fire,
The look of snow, to the praise of a dwindled choir,
Song of degenerate specters that were men?
The sons of the fathers shall keep her, worthy of
What these have done in love."

True, it is said of our Lady, she ageth.
But see, if you peep shrewdly, she hath not stooped;
Take no thought of her servitors that have drooped,
For we are nothing; and if one talk of death—
Why, the ribs of the earth subsist frail as a breath
If but God wearieth.

PIAZZA PIECE

—I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying
To make you hear. Your ears are soft and small
And listen to an old man not at all;
They want the young men's whispering and sighing.
But see the roses on your trellis dying
And hear the spectral singing of the moon—
For I must have my lovely lady soon.
I am a gentleman in a dustcoat trying.

—I am a lady young in beauty waiting
Until my truelove comes, and then we kiss.
But what gray man among the vines is this

Whose words are dry and faint as in a dream?
Back from my trellis, sir, before I scream!
I am a lady young in beauty waiting.

CAPTAIN CARPENTER

Captain Carpenter rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But had got wellnigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout.

It was a pretty lady and all her train
That played with him so sweetly but before
An hour she'd taken a sword with all her main
And twined him of his nose for evermore.

Captain Carpenter mounted up one day
And rode straightway into a stranger rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as it may
The Captain did not wait upon prologue.

But drew upon him out of his great heart
The other swung against him with a club
And cracked his two legs at the shinny part
And let him roll and stick like any tub.

Captain Carpenter rode many a time
From male and female took he sundry harms
He met the wife of Satan crying "I'm
The she-wolf bids you shall bear no more arms."

Their strokes and counters whistled in the wind
I wish he had delivered half his blows
But where she should have made off like a hind
The bitch bit off his arms at the elbows.

And Captain Carpenter parted with his ears
To a black devil that used him in this wise
O jesus ere his threescore and ten years
Another had plucked out his sweet blue eyes.

Captain Carpenter got up on his roan
And sallied from the gate in hell's despite
I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
If any enemy yet there was to fight?

"To any adversary it is fame
If he risk to be wounded by my tongue
Or burnt in two beneath my red heart's flame
Such are the perils he is cast among.

"But if he can he has a pretty choice
From an anatomy with little to lose
Whether he cut my tongue and take my voice
Or whether it be my round red heart he choose."

It was the neatest knave that ever was seen
Stepping in perfume from his lady's bower
Who at this word put in his merry mien
And fell on Captain Carpenter like a tower.

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
His weapons were the old heart in his bust
And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack.

The rogue in scarlet and gray soon knew his mind
He wished to get his trophy and depart;
With gentle apology and touch refined
He pierced him and produced the Captain's heart.

God's mercy rest on Captain Carpenter now
I thought him Sirs an honest gentleman
Citizen husband soldier and scholar enow
Let jangling kites eat of him if they can.

But God's deep curses follow after those
That shore him of his goodly nose and ears
His legs and strong arms at the two elbows
And eyes that had not watered seventy years.

The curse of hell upon the sleek upstart
Who got the Captain finally on his back
And took the red red vitals of his heart
And made the kites to whet their beaks clack clack.

BLUE GIRLS

Twirling your blue skirts, traveling the sward
Under the towers of your seminary,
Go listen to your teachers old and contrary
Without believing a word.

Tie the white fillets then about your lustrous hair
And think no more of what will come to pass
Than bluebirds that go walking on the grass
And chattering on the air.

Practice your beauty, blue girls, before it fail;
And I will cry with my loud lips and publish
Beauty which all our power shall never establish,
It is so frail.

For I could tell you a story which is true:
I know a lady with a terrible tongue,
Blear eyes fallen from blue,
All her perfections tarnished—and yet it is not long
Since she was lovelier than any of you.

OLD MAN PONDERED

Three times he crossed our way where with me went
One who is fair and gentle, and it was strange,
But not once glancing did his vision range
Wayward on me, or my most innocent,
But strictly watched his own predicament.
How are old spirits so dead? His eyes seemed true
As mine, he walked by it, it was as blue,
How came it monstered in its fixed intent?

But I will venture how. In his long years
Close-watched and dangerous, many a bright-barbed hate
Burning had smote against the optic gate
To enter and destroy. But the quick gears

Blinked shut the aperture. Else those grim leers
Had won to the inner chamber where sat Hope
To spin and pray, and made her misanthrope,
And bled her courage with a thousand spears.

Thus hate and scorn. And he must guard as well
Against alluring love, whose mild engine
Was perilous too for the lone sitter-in,
So hard consented to her little cell;
The tenderest looks vainly upon him fell,
Of dearest company, lest one light arrow
Be sharpened with a most immortal sorrow.
So had he kept his mansion shut of hell.

Firm and upright he walked for one so old,
Thrice-pondered; and I dare not prophesy
What age must bring me; for I look round bold
And seek my enemies out; and leave untold
The sideway watery dog's-glances I
Send fawning on you, thinking you will not scold.

LEW SARETT

Lew Sarett was born May 16, 1888, in Chicago, Illinois, and reared in the state of Michigan and in the Lake Superior country. He was educated at Beloit and the University of Illinois, receiving his LL.B. at the latter institution in 1916. However, he never practiced law because, as he says, "foot-loose adventures in the woods ruined me for any confining work." After sixteen he spent much of his life in the Rocky Mountains and in the Canadian North; for eight years he worked intermittently as woodsman and guide in that region. He has been a United States Ranger and still spends several months of each year in the remote districts of the National Parks. In this nomadic life on the frontiers of America he has lived much of the time with Indians and backwoods folk; thus he has come to understand the bush country, the voyageur, and the aborigine.

Sarett's first volume, *Many Many Moons,* appeared in 1920. It is, as he calls it, a book of wilderness poems, poems which endeavor to capture the peculiar influence of Indian thought as well as nature in its wilder aspects. His long and impressionistic monolog, "The Box of God" was awarded the Levinson prize (offered

through *Poetry*) for 1921. It became the title poem of a subsequent volume, *The Box of God* (1922), a collection which expresses a sort of primitive pantheism; even the lyrics echo the wood sounds and scenes which are familiar to the Indian, even though it is not the Indian himself who speaks. Here are flute notes as well as the rattle of dried gourds and the dull insistence of the tom-tom.

Sarett's more recent lyrics show a wider range; there is social significance in such verses as "Feud," which is intensified by a passion personal as well as racial. A third volume, *Slow Smoke* (1925), reveals an increase in technique and a wider outlook upon life.

IRON-WIND DANCES

Over and under
The shaking sky,
The war-drums thunder
When I dance by!—
Ho! a warrior proud,
I dance on a cloud,
For my ax shall feel
The enemy reel;
My heart shall thrill
To a bloody kill,—
Ten Sioux dead
Split open of head!—
Look! to the West!—
The sky-line drips,—
Blood from the breast!
Blood from the lips!
Ho! when I dance by,
The war-drums thunder
Over and under
The shaking sky.
Beat, beat on the drums,
For the Thunderbird comes.
Wuh!
Wuh!

FEUD

Poor wayworn creature! Oh, sorely harried deer,
What drove you, quivering like a poplar-blade,
To refuge with my herd? What holds you here
Within my meadow, broken and afraid?

Tilting your nose to tainted air, you thrill
And freeze to wailing wolves! Fear you the sound
Of the coyotes eager for a tender kill?
Or yet the baying of the hunter's hound?

Let fall your anguish, harried one, and rest;
Bed yourself down among your kin, my cattle;
Sleep unperturbed. No spoiler shall molest
You here this night, for I shall wage your battle.

There was a day when coyotes in a pack,
Wolves of another hue, another breed,
With Christ upon their lips, set out to track
Me down and drop me, for my blood, my creed.

Oh, hunted creature, once I knew the thud
Of padded feet that put you into flight,
The bugle-cry, suffused with lust for blood,
That trembled in the silver bell of night.

I knew your frenzied rocky run, the burst
Of lungs, the rivers of fire in every vein;
I knew your foaming lip, your boundless thirst,
The rain of molten-hammering in your brain.

Abide with me, then, against the wolves' return,
For I shall carry on the feud for you;
And it shall be, to me, of small concern
If the wolf-hearts walk on four soft feet or two.

Oh, let them come! And I shall burn their flanks
With a blast of hell to end their revelry,
And whistle molten silver through their ranks,
Laughing—one round for you, and one for me.

TO A WILD GOOSE OVER DECOYS

O lonely trumpeter, coasting down the sky,
Like a winter leaf blown from the bur-oak tree
By whipping winds, and flapping silverly
Against the sun,—I know your lonely cry.

I know the worn wild heart that bends your flight
And circles you above this beckoning lake,
Eager of neck, to find the honking drake
Who speaks of reedy refuge for the night.

I know the sudden rapture that you fling
In answer to our friendly gander's call—
Halloo! Beware decoys!—or you will fall
With a silver bullet whistling in your wing.

Beat on your weary flight across the blue!
Beware, O traveler, of our gabbling geese!
Beware this weedy counterfeit of peace!—
Oh, I was once a passing bird like you.

HANIEL LONG

Haniel Long was born in Rangoon, Burma, March 9, 1888, and was educated at Exeter and Harvard. He has been teaching for some years at the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with intervals of travel in Europe and the Far West.

Poems (1920) is one of the shyest volumes ever issued; even its fugitive fancies are apologetically reticent. But there is humor in Long, though his whimsicality is as modest as his unassertive and infrequent lyrics.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

They say that dead men tell no tales!

Except of barges with red sails
And sailors mad for nightingales;

Except of jongleurs stretched at ease
Beside old highways through the trees;

Except of dying moons that break
The hearts of lads who lie awake;

Except of fortresses in shade,
And heroes crumbled and betrayed.

But dead men tell no tales, they say!

Except old tales that burn away
The stifling tapestries of day:

Old tales of life, of love and hate,
Of time and space, and will, and fate.

SONG

Poppies paramour the girls;
Lilies put the boys to bed;
Death is nothing else than this
After everything is said.

They are safe and shall not fade,
After everything is done,
Past the solace of the shade
Or the rescue of the sun.

ALINE KILMER

Aline (Murray) Kilmer, step-daughter of Henry Mills Alden, the late editor-in-chief of *Harper's Magazine*, was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1888. She was married to Joyce Kilmer in 1909 and after his death, during battle in France, began to deliver lectures, starting in 1917. Since her youth she has lived in New York.

Candles That Burn (1919), her first volume, reveals a personal warmth. Here is a domesticated flame, a quiet but none the less colorful hearth-fire. By its light Mrs. Kilmer's world is revealed with a quaintly individualized grace. Her poems about her children are particularly well characterized. *Vigils* (1921) is a more ambitious offering. The nimble dexterity of "Unlearning," the banter of "Experience" and the clean fervor of "Things" display Mrs. Kilmer as a distinct personality.

Early in 1925 Mrs. Kilmer's third volume appeared. *The Poor King's Daughter* has the grace of the preceding collections plus an ironic self-appraisal which even the sharpest of Mrs. Kilmer's earlier verses did not lead one to expect. The contrasts of her expression may best be observed in *Selected Poems* (1929).

EXPERIENCE

Deborah danced, when she was two,
As buttercups and daffodils do;

Spirited, frail, naïvely bold,
Her hair a ruffled crest of gold.
And whenever she spoke her voice went singing
Like water up from a fountain springing.

But now her step is quiet and slow;
She walks the way primroses go;
Her hair is yellow instead of gilt,
Her voice is losing its lovely lilt;
And in place of her wild, delightful ways
A quaint precision rules her days.

For Deborah now is three, and, oh,
She knows so much that she did not know.

THINGS[1]

Sometimes when I am at tea with you,
I catch my breath
At a thought that is old as the world is old
And more bitter than death.

It is that the spoon that you just laid down
And the cup that you hold
May be here shining and insolent
When you are still and cold.

Your careless note that I laid away
May leap to my eyes like flame,
When the world has almost forgotten your voice
Or the sound of your name.

[1] Compare this poem with Conrad Aiken's "Bread and Music" on page 596.

The golden Virgin da Vinci drew
May smile on over my head,
And daffodils nod in the silver vase
When you are dead.

So let moth and dust corrupt and thieves
Break through and I shall be glad,
Because of the hatred I bear to things
Instead of the love I had.

For life seems only a shuddering breath,
A smothered, desperate cry;
And things have a terrible permanence
When people die.

ALAN SEEGER

Alan Seeger was born in New York, June 22, 1888. When he was still a baby, his parents moved to Staten Island, where he remained through boyhood. Later, there were several other migrations, including a sojourn in Mexico, where Seeger spent the most impressionable years of his youth. In 1906 he entered Harvard; became one of the editors of the *Harvard Monthly;* returned to New York in 1910 and in 1913 set off for Paris—"a departing point," wrote William Archer, "which may fairly be called his Hegira, the turning point of his history." 1914 came, and the European war had not entered its third week when, along with some forty of his fellow-countrymen, Seeger enlisted in the Foreign Legion of France. He was in action almost continually, serving on various fronts. On July 1, 1916, a new advance began; a few days later the Legion was ordered to clear the Germans out of the village of Belloy-en-Santerre. On the fourth of July Seeger advanced in the first rush and his squad was practically wiped out by hidden machine-gun fire. Seeger fell, mortally wounded, and died the next morning.

Seeger's literary promise was far greater than his actual accomplishment. With the exception of his one famous poem, there is little of importance in his collected *Poems* (published, with an Introduction by William Archer, in 1916). His letters from the front (published in 1917) show a keener sense of perception. Had he lived a few years more, he might have been an important recorder of a changed and changing world.

"I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH"

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

WILLARD WATTLES

Willard (Austin) Wattles was born at Bayneville, Kansas, July 8, 1888. He received his A.B. at the University of Kansas in 1909 and since 1910 has divided his time between teaching English and harvesting wheat.

His first book was an anthology, *Sunflowers: A Book of Kansas Poems* (1914), to which he also contributed. *Lanterns in Gethsemane* (1918) consists, almost entirely, of mystical and religious poems. There is, however, little sermonizing unction and less cant in these pages. There is a fresh vibrancy, a buoyance that glows against its theological background. Many of Wattles' verses have

the peculiar grace of a parable joined to a nursery rhyme; "The Builder," "Jericho" and a few others seem like scraps of the Scripture rendered by Mother Goose.

THE BUILDER

Smoothing a cypress beam
With a scarred hand,
I saw a carpenter
In a far land.

Down past the flat roofs
Poured the white sun;
But still he bent his back,
The patient one.

And I paused surprised
In that queer place
To find an old man
With a haunting face.

"Who art thou, carpenter,
Of the bowed head;
And what buildest thou?"
"Heaven," he said.

CREEDS

How pitiful are little folk—
They seem so very small;
They look at stars, and think they are
Denominational.

CONRAD AIKEN

Conrad (Potter) Aiken was born at Savannah, Georgia, August 5, 1889. He attended Harvard, was chosen class poet during his senior year, received his A.B. in 1912, traveled extensively for three years, and since then devoted all his time to literature, living at South Yarmouth, Massachusetts, until 1921. In that year he moved his family to England; a few years later he bought a house on the Sussex coast at Rye. In 1928 he returned to America.

The outstanding feature of Aiken's work is its rapid adaptability and its slow growth. His first volume, *Earth Triumphant and Other Tales in Verse* (1914), is the Keats tradition crossed, paraphrased, and vulgarized by Masefield. *Turns and Movies* (1916) is a complete change; Masefield is exchanged for Masters. But in the less conspicuous half of this book Aiken begins to speak with his true voice. Here he is the natural musician, playing with new rhythms, haunting cadences. *The Jig of Forslin* (1916) is an elaboration of his method. In this volume Aiken goes back to the narrative—or rather, to a series of loosely connected stories—and, reënforced by studies in analytical psychology, explores "the process of vicarious wish fulfillment by which civilized man enriches his circumscribed life."

Nocturne of Remembered Spring (1917), *The Charnel Rose* (1918) and *The House of Dust* (1920) are packed with a tired but often beautiful music. Even though it is enlivened by injections of T. S. Eliot's conversational idiom, the effect is frequently misty and monotonous. Rain seems to fall persistently through these volumes; dust blows down the street; the shadows blur; everything dissolves in a wash of boredom and forgetfulness. Even the poignance seems on the point of falling asleep.

Often Aiken loses himself in this watery welter of language. In trying to create a closer *liaison* between poetry and music, he places so much importance on the rise and fall of syllables that his very excess of melody defeats his purpose. His verse, thus, gains greatly on the sensuous side, but loses, in its murmuring indefiniteness, that vitality of speech which is the very blood of poetry. It is a subaqueous music, strangely like the magic of Debussy.

This weakening overinsistence on sound does not prevent Aiken from attaining many exquisite effects. Primarily, a lyric poet, he condenses an emotion in a few lines; some of his best moments are these "lapses" into tune. The music of the Morning Song from "Senlin" (in *The Charnel Rose*) is rich with subtleties of rhythm. But it is much more than a lyrical movement. Beneath the flow and flexibility of these lines there is a delightful whimsicality, a summoning of those immensities that loom behind the casual moments of everyday.

Punch: The Immortal Liar is an almost complete *volte face.* After it seemed established that Aiken's gift was limited to the twitching of overrefined nerves, to a too ready response to gloomy subconsciousness, the poet strikes out toward a naked directness. Dazzling though the first half of this work is, it is the second part which attains the heights. Here Punch, stripped of his mask of braggadocio, is revealed as the solitary, frustrated dreamer;

a pitiful puppet floundering in a net he cannot see; jerked and gesticulating without knowledge of the strings which direct him—a symbol, in short, of man as marionette. This second part of *Punch* contains, not only Aiken's most delicate exposition of the inhibited soul, but some of the finest lyrics he has produced. Whatever the theme, the musician is triumphant.

Priapus and the Pool (1922) is preponderantly lyrical, containing twenty-five songs, several of which are as moving as those of any contemporary American singer. The succeeding volume, *The Pilgrimage of Festus* (1923), returns to the symphonic form; beneath its imaginative outlines it is an extended essay in epistemology. Festus is the lineal descendant of Aiken's own Senlin and a not distant relative of Ibsen's Peer Gynt. A revised and enlarged edition of *Priapus and the Pool* appeared in 1925.

Aiken, the keenest critic of his own poetry, has been quick to see its limitations as well as its potentialities. In a self-analysis in which he confessed that his verse has groped continually toward symphonic arrangement, Aiken wrote, "Here I give myself away as being in quest of a sort of absolute poetry, a poetry in which the intention is not so much to arouse an emotion, or to persuade of a reality, as to employ such emotion or sense of reality (tangentially struck) with the same cool detachment with which a composer employs notes or chords."

Here we are at the heart of the contradiction: the paradox that, though Aiken is undoubtedly one of the most musical of living poets, he is one of the least popular. An audience that prefers its emotion outright, that craves a palpable reality, resents (or, worse, ignores) the nuance "tangentially struck." The emphasis on overtone and implication creates, too often, an obscure pantomime; it is, as Aiken himself was quick to see, "a prestidigitation in which the juggler's bottles or balls are a little too apt, unfortunately, to be altogether invisible." What is even more obvious, an audience is quick to sense the performer's uncertainty. This—until the most recent work—has been Aiken's undoing. He has fancied himself as a symphonist when he was, preëminently, a lyricist, albeit a lyricist neither pure nor simple. More than any contemporary, except T. S. Eliot (who, I suspect, has learned several tricks in juxtaposition and dissonance from Aiken) he has evolved a subtly subjective poetry which flows as smoothly, as surprisingly as the stream of the subconscious. He has given formlessness a form, has brought tortured self-analysis to a pitch of pure poetry, and (whether in the suspensions of the famous "Morning Song of Senlin" or the more certain modulations of "Tetélestai") he has registered an immediacy of anguish. Aiken's growth in tonal surety must be evident to all but the tone-deaf.

"The Road" is more than a compelling dream-picture; in it Aiken contradicts his own credo and participates in the struggle of humanity. "At a Concert of Music" and "Annihilation" bring the earlier modulations to a perfect cadence; the later *Preludes* suggest, as far as words ever can, that "absolute poetry" to which Aiken has so often tuned his muted horns and violas *con sordino*. A representative *Selected Poems* was published in 1929, winning Aiken the Pulitzer Prize the year following.

Besides his poetry, Aiken has written a host of reviews, some of them containing extraordinarily sensitive criticism. *Scepticisms* (1919) is a provocative and valuable set of studies. His anthologies—*Modern American Poets* (1922) and *American Poetry, 1671-1928*—suffer from Aiken's predilection for experimental and abstract verse, but are far superior to the ordinary compilation. He edited the first *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson* which appeared in England in 1924. In that year his prose began to attract attention. *Bring! Bring!* (1925) and *Costumes by Eros* (1928) are collections of introspective short stories in a successful if not altogether new genre. *Blue Voyage* (1927) is less influenced, a novel closely woven and strangely unresolved.

BREAD AND MUSIC

Music I heard with you was more than music,
And bread I broke with you was more than bread;
Now that I am without you, all is desolate;
All that was once so beautiful is dead.

Your hands once touched this table and this silver,
And I have seen your fingers hold this glass.
These things do not remember you, belovèd,
And yet your touch upon them will not pass.

For it was in my heart you moved among them,
And blessed them with your hands and with your eyes;
And in my heart they will remember always,—
They knew you once, O beautiful and wise.

MIRACLES

Twilight is spacious, near things in it seem far,
And distant things seem near.
Now in the green west hangs a yellow star.
And now across old waters you may hear

The profound gloom of bells among still trees,
Like a rolling of huge bowlders beneath seas.

Silent as thought in evening contemplation
Weaves the bat under the gathering stars.
Silent as dew, we seek new incarnation,
Meditate new avatars.
In a clear dusk like this
Mary climbed up the hill to seek her son,
To lower him down from the cross, and kiss
The mauve wounds, every one.

Men with wings
In the dusk walked softly after her.
She did not see them, but may have felt
The winnowed air around her stir;
She did not see them, but may have known
Why her son's body was light as a little stone.
She may have guessed that other hands were there
Moving the watchful air.

Now, unless persuaded by searching music
Which suddenly opens the portals of the mind,
We guess no angels,
And are contented to be blind.
Let us blow silver horns in the twilight,
And lift our hearts to the yellow star in the green,
To find perhaps, if, while the dew is rising,
Clear things may not be seen.

MORNING SONG FROM "SENLIN"

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face!—

The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

THE PUPPET DREAMS

(*From "Punch: The Immortal Liar"*)

There is a fountain in a wood
Where wavering lies a moon:
It plays to the slowly falling leaves
A sleepy tune.

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory:
The peacock spreads his tail, the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

There, amid silken sounds and wine
And music idly broken,
The drowsy god observes his world
With no word spoken.

Arcturus, rise! Orion, fall! . . .
The white-winged stars obey. . . .
Or else he greets his Fellow-God;
And there, in the dusk, they play

A game of chess with stars for pawns
And a silver moon for queen:
Immeasurable as clouds, above
A chess-board world they lean

And thrust their hands amid their beards,
And utter words profound
That shake the star-swung firmament
With a fateful sound! . . .

. . . The peach-trees lean upon a wall
Of gold and ivory;
The peacock spreads his tail; the leaves
Fall silently. . . .

THE ROOM

Through that window—all else being extinct
Except itself and me—I saw the struggle
Of darkness against darkness. Within the room
It turned and turned, dived downward. Then I saw
How order might—if chaos wished—become:
And saw the darkness crush upon itself,
Contracting powerfully; it was as if
It killed itself, slowly: and with much pain.
Pain. The scene was pain, and nothing but pain.
What else, when chaos draws all forces inward
To shape a single leaf? . . .
For the leaf came
Alone and shining in the empty room;
After a while the twig shot downward from it;
And from the twig a bough; and then the trunk,
Massive and coarse; and last the one black root.
The black root cracked the walls. Boughs burst the window:
The great tree took possession.

Tree of trees!
Remember (when time comes) how chaos died
To shape the shining leaf. Then turn, have courage,
Wrap arms and roots together, be convulsed
With grief, and bring back chaos out of shape.
I will be watching then as I watch now.
I will praise darkness now, but then the leaf.

AND IN THE HANGING GARDENS—

And in the hanging gardens there is rain
From midnight until one, striking the leaves
And bells of flowers, and stroking boles of planes,
And drawing slow arpeggios over pools
And stretching strings of sound from eaves to ferns.
The princess reads. The knave of diamond sleeps.
The king is drunk, and flings a golden goblet
Down from the turret window (curtained with rain)
Into the lilacs.
And at one o'clock
The vulcan under the garden wakes and beats
The gong upon his anvil. Then the rain
Ceases, but gently ceases, dripping still,
And sound of falling water fills the dark
As leaves grow bold and upright, and as eaves
Part with water. The princess turns the page
Beside the candle, and between two braids
Of golden hair. And reads: "From there I went
Northward a journey of four days, and came
To a wild village in the hills, where none
Was living save the vulture and the rat
And one old man who laughed but could not speak.
The roofs were fallen in, the well grown over
With weed. And it was here my father died.
Then eight days further, bearing slightly west,
The cold wind blowing sand against our faces,
The food tasting of sand. And as we stood
By the dry rock that marks the highest point
My brother said: 'Not too late is it yet
To turn, remembering home.' And we were silent
Thinking of home." The princess shuts her eyes

And feels the tears forming beneath her eyelids
And opens them, and tears fall on the page.
The knave of diamonds in the darkened room
Throws off his covers, sleeps, and snores again.
The king goes slowly down the turret stairs
To find the goblet.

And at two o'clock
The vulcan in his smithy underground
Under the hanging gardens, where the drip
Of rain among the clematis and ivy
Still falls from sipping flower to purple flower
Smites twice his anvil, and the murmur comes
Among the roots and vines. The princess reads:
"As I am sick, and cannot write you more,
And have not long to live, I give this letter
To him, my brother, who will bear it south
And tell you how I died. Ask how it was,
There in the northern desert, where the grass
Was withered, and the horses, all but one,
Perished . . ." The princess drops her golden head
Upon the page between her two white arms
And golden braids. The knave of diamonds wakes
And at his window in the darkened room
Watches the lilacs tossing, where the king
Seeks for the goblet.

And at three o'clock
The moon inflames the lilac heads, and thrice
The vulcan, in his root-bound smithy, clangs
His anvil; and the sounds creep softly up
Among the vines and walls. The moon is round,
Round as a shield above the turret top.
The princess blows her candle out, and weeps
In the pale room, where scent of lilacs comes,
Weeping, with hands across her eyelids, thinking
Of withered grass, withered by sandy wind.
The knave of diamonds, in his darkened room,
Holds in his hands a key, and softly steps
Along the corridor, and slides the key
Into the door that guards her. Meanwhile, slowly,
The king, with raindrops on his beard and hands,
And dripping sleeves, climbs up the turret stairs,

Holding the goblet upright in one hand;
And pauses on the midmost step, to taste
One drop of wine, wherewith wild rain has mixed.

PORTRAIT OF A GIRL

This is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower,
And this the pale bole of the tree
Which watches its bough in a pool of unwavering water
In a land we never shall see.

The thrush on the bough is silent, the dew falls softly,
In the evening is hardly a sound. . . .
And the three beautiful pilgrims who come here together
Touch lightly the dust of the ground.

Touch it with feet that trouble the dust but as wings do,
Come shyly together, are still,
Like dancers who wait in a pause of the music, for music
The exquisite silence to fill . . .

This is the thought of the first, and this of the second,
And this the grave thought of the third:
"Linger we thus for a moment, palely expectant,
And silence will end, and the bird

"Sing the pure phrase, sweet phrase, clear phrase in the twilight
To fill the blue bell of the world;
And we, who on music so leaflike have drifted together,
Leaflike apart shall be whirled

"Into what but the beauty of silence, silence forever? . . ."
. . . This is the shape of the tree,
And the flower and the leaf, and the three pale beautiful pilgrims:
This is what you are to me.

THE ROAD

Three then came forward out of darkness, one
An old man bearded, his old eyes red with weeping,

A peasant, with hard hands. "Come now," he said,
"And see the Road, for which our people die.
Twelve miles of road we've made, a little only,
Westward winding. Of human blood and stone
We build; and in a thousand years will come
Beyond the hills to sea."
I went with them,
Taking a lantern, which upon their faces
Showed years and grief; and in a time we came
To the wild road which wound among wild hills
Westward; and so along this road we stopped,
Silent, thinking of all the dead men there
Compounded with sad clay. Slowly we moved:
For they were old and weak, had given all
Their life to build this twelve poor miles of road,
Muddy, under the rain. And in my hand,
Turning the lantern here or there, I saw
Deep holes of water where the raindrop splashed,
And rainfilled footprints in the grass, and heaps
Of broken stone, and rusted spades and picks,
And helves of axes. And the old man spoke,
Holding my wrist: "Three hundred years it took
To build these miles of road: three hundred years;
And human lives unnumbered. But the day
Will come when it is done." Then spoke another,
One not so old, but old, whose face was wrinkled:
"And when it comes, our people will all sing
For joy, passing from east to west, or west
To east, returning, with the light behind them;
All meeting in the road and singing there."
And the third said: "The road will be their life;
A heritage of blood. Grief will be in it,
And beauty out of grief. And I can see
How all the women's faces will be bright.
In that time, laughing, they will remember us.
Blow out your lantern now, for day is coming."

My lantern blown out, in a little while
We climbed in long light up a hill, where climbed
The dwindling road, and ended in a field.
Peasants were working in the field, bowed down

With unrewarded work and grief and years
Of pain. And as we passed them, one man fell
Into a furrow that was bright with water
And gave a cry that was half cry, half song—
"The road . . . the road . . . the road . . ." And all then fell
Upon their knees and sang.
We four passed on
Over the hills, to westward. . . . Then I felt
How tears ran down my face, tears without end,
And knew that all my life henceforth was weeping,
Weeping, thinking of human grief, and human
Endeavor fruitless in a world of pain.
And when I held my hands up they were old;
I knew my face would not be young again.

ANNIHILATION

While the blue noon above us arches
And the poplar sheds disconsolate leaves,
Tell me again why love bewitches
And what love gives.

Is it the trembling finger that traces
The eyebrow's curve, the curve of the cheek?
The mouth that quivers, while the hand caresses,
But cannot speak?

No, not these, not in these is hidden
The secret, more than in other things:
Not only the touch of a hand can gladden
Till the blood sings.

It is the leaf that falls between us,
The bell that murmurs, the shadows that move,
The autumnal sunlight that fades upon us,
These things are love.

It is the "No, let us sit here longer,"
The "Wait till tomorrow," the "Once I knew"—
These trifles, said as you touch my finger
And the clock strikes two.

The world is intricate, and we are nothing.
It is the complex world of grass,
The twig on the path, a look of loathing,
Feelings that pass—

These are the secret; and I could hate you
When, as I lean for another kiss,
I see in your eyes that I do not meet you,
And that love is this.

Rock meeting rock can know love better
Than eyes that stare or lips that touch.
All that we know in love is bitter,
And it is not much.

THE QUARREL

Suddenly, after the quarrel, while we waited,
Disheartened, silent, with downcast looks, nor stirred
Eyelid nor finger, hopeless both, yet hoping
Against all hope to unsay the sundering word:

While all the room's stillness deepened, deepened about us,
And each of us crept his thought's way to discover
How, with as little sound as the fall of a leaf,
The shadow had fallen, and lover quarreled with lover;

And while, in the quiet, I marveled—alas, alas—
At your deep beauty, your tragic beauty, torn
As the pale flower is torn by the wanton sparrow—
This beauty, pitied and loved, and now forsworn;

It was then, when the instant darkened to its darkest,—
When faith was lost with hope, and the rain conspired
To strike its gray arpeggios against our heartstrings,—
When love no longer dared, and scarcely desired:

It was then that suddenly, in the neighbor's room,
The music started: that brave quartette of strings
Breaking out of the stillness, as out of our stillness,
Like the indomitable heart of life that sings

When all is lost; and startled from our sorrow,
Tranced from our grief by that diviner grief,
We raised remembering eyes, each looked at other,
Blinded with tears of joy; and another leaf

Fell silently as that first; and in the instant
The shadow had gone, our quarrel became absurd;
And we rose, to the angelic voices of the music,
And I touched your hand, and we kissed, without a word.

"WHEN THE TREE BARES"

When the tree bares, the music of it changes:
Hard and keen is the sound, long and mournful;
Pale are the poplar boughs in the evening light
Above my house, against a slate-cold cloud.
When the house ages and the tenants leave it,
Crickets sing in the tall grass by the threshold;
Spider, by the cold mantel, hangs his web.
Here, in a hundred years from that clear season
When first I came here, bearing lights and music,
To this old ghostly house my ghost will come,—
Pause in the half-light, turn by the poplar, glide
Above tall grasses through the broken door.
Who will say that he saw—or the dusk deceived him—
A mist with hands of mist blow down from the tree
And open the door and enter and close it after?
Who will say that he saw, as midnight struck
Its tremulous golden twelve, a light in the window,
And first heard music, as of an old piano,
Music remote, as if it came from the earth,
Far down; and then, in the quiet, eager voices?
". . . Houses grow old and die, houses have ghosts.
Once in a hundred years we return, old house,
And live once more." . . . And then the ancient answer,
In a voice not human, but more like the creak of boards
Or a rattle of panes in the wind—"Not as the owner,
But as a guest you come, to fires not lit
By hands of yours. . . . Through these long-silent chambers
Move slowly, turn, return, and bring once more
Your lights and music. It will be good to talk."

PRELUDE

This is not you? These phrases are not you?
That pomegranate of verses was not you?
The green bright leaf not you, nor the gold fruit
Burning amongst the leaves,—hot fruit of gold,—
Nor bird, nor bough, nor bole, nor heaven's blue? . . .
Alas, dear woman, I have sung in vain.

Let me dishevel then once more the leaves
Of Cupid's bright thesaurus, and there find
The word of words, the crimson seed of seeds,
The aureate sound of sounds; and out of this
Conceive once more your beauty, and in terms
Your feminine keen eye will not disdain.

For this is you: on April page it is,
Again on June, and once more on December;
On August page I find it twice; and March
Chronicles it in footnote; and July
Asserts it roundly. Thus, from page to page,
I find you many times in many terms.

It is a snowflake, which is like a star,
And melts upon the hand; it is a cobweb,
Shot with silver, that from the golden lip
Of April's dandelion hangs to the grass;
It is a raindrop,—of tremendous worth,—
Which slides the whole length of a lilac leaf. . . .

This is not you? these symbols are not you?
Not snowflake, cobweb, raindrop? . . . Woman, woman,
You are too literal, too strict with me.
What would you have? Some simple copper coin—
I love you, you are lovely, I adore you?
Or (better still) dumb silence, and a look?

No, no, this will not do; I am not one
For whom these silences are sovereign;
The pauses in the music are not music,
Although they make the music what it is.

Therefore I thumb once more the god's thesaurus,
For phrase and praise, and find it all for you.

It is a star which might be thought a snowflake,
Lost in a twinkling; it is a dandelion
Shrouded with silver brightness; it is a leaf
Which lets the raindrop go, but keeps its light. . . .
It is the purple veining in the white
That makes the pure throat of the iris pure. . . .

Yet you would have me say your hair is Helen's,—
Your gait angelic; while I turn from these
To the vast pages of that manuscript
On which the stars are stars, the world a world;
And there I find you written down, between
Arcturus and a primrose and the sea.

CLOISTER

So, in the evening, to the simple cloister:
This place of boughs, where sounds of water, softly,
Lap on the stones. And this is what you are:
Here, in this dusty room, to which you climb
By four steep flights of stairs. The door is closed:
The furies of the city howl behind you:
The last bell plunges rock-like to the sea:
The horns of taxis wail in vain. You come
Once more, at evening, to this simple cloister;
Hushed by the quiet walls, you stand at peace.

What ferns of thought are these, the cool and green,
Dripping with moisture, that festoon these walls?
What water-lights are these, whose pallid rings
Dance with the leaves, or speckle the pale stones?
What spring is this, that bubbles the cold sand,
Urging the sluggish grains of white and gold? . . .
Peace. The delicious silence throngs with ghosts
Of wingèd sound and shadow. These are you.

Now in the evening, in the simple cloister,
You stand and wait; you stand and listen, waiting
For wingèd sounds, and wingèd silences,

And long-remembered shadows. Here the rock
Lets down its vine of many-colored flowers:
Waiting for you, or waiting for the lizard
To move his lifted claw, or shift his eye
Quick as a jewel. Here the lizard waits
For the slow snake to slide among cold leaves.
And, on the bough that arches the deep pool,
Lapped in a sound of water, the brown thrush
Waits, too, and listens, till his silence makes
Silence as deep as song. And time becomes
A timeless crystal, an eternity,
In which the gone and coming are at peace.

What bird is this, whose silence fills the trees
With rich delight? What leaves and boughs are these,
What lizard, and what snake? . . . The bird is gone:
And while you wait, another comes and goes,—
Another and another; yet your eye,
Although it has not moved, can scarcely say
If birds have come and gone,—so quick, so brief,—
Or if the thrush who waits there is the same. . . .
The snake and lizard change, yet are the same:
The flowers, many-colored, on the vine,
Open and close their multitude of stars,—
Yet are the same. . . . And all these things are you.

Thus, in the evening, in the simple cloister,
Eternity adds ring to ring, the darker
Beyond the brighter; and your silence fills
With such a world of worlds,—so still, so deep,—
As never voice could speak, whether it were
The ocean's or the bird's. The night comes on:
You wait and listen, in the darkened room,
To all these ghosts of change. And they are you.

AT A CONCERT OF MUSIC

Be still, while the music rises about us: the deep enchantment
Towers, like a forest of singing leaves and birds,
Built for an instant by the heart's troubled beating,
Beyond all power of words.

And while you are silent, listening, I escape you,
And I run, by a secret path, through that bright wood
To another time, forgotten, and another woman,
And another mood.

Then, too, the music's pure algebra of enchantment
Wrought all about us a bird-voice-haunted grove.
Then, too, I escaped, as now, to an earlier moment
And a brighter love.

Alas! Can I never have peace in the shining instant?
The hard bright crystal of being, in time and space?
Must I always touch, in the moment, a remembered moment,
A remembered face?

Absolve me: I would adore you, had I the secret,
With all this music's power, for yourself alone:
I would try to answer, in the world's chaotic symphony,
Your one clear tone:

But alas, alas, being everything you are nothing;
The history of all my life is in your face;
And all I can grasp is an earlier, more haunted moment,
And a happier place.

TETELESTAI

I

How shall we praise the magnificence of the dead,
The great man humbled, the haughty brought to dust?
Is there a horn we should not blow as proudly
For the meanest of us all, who creeps his days,
Guarding his heart from blows, to die obscurely?
I am no king, have laid no kingdoms waste,
Taken no princes captive, led no triumphs
Of weeping women through long walls of trumpets;
Say rather, I am no one, or an atom;
Say rather, two great gods, in a vault of starlight,
Play ponderingly at chess, and at the game's end
One of the pieces, shaken, falls to the floor
And runs to the darkest corner; and that piece

Forgotten there, left motionless, is I. . . .
Say that I have no name, no gifts, no power,
Am only one of millions, mostly silent;
One who came with eyes and hands and a heart,
Looked on beauty, and loved it, and left it.
Say that the fates of time and space obscured me,
Led me a thousand ways to pain, bemused me,
Wrapped me in ugliness; and like great spiders
Dispatched me at their leisure. . . . Well, what then?
Should I not hear, as I lie down in dust,
The horns of glory blowing above my burial?

II

Morning and evening opened and closed above me:
Houses were built above me; trees let fall
Yellowing leaves upon me, hands of ghosts;
Rain has showered its arrows of silver upon me
Seeking my heart; winds have roared and tossed me;
Music in long blue waves of sound has borne me
A helpless weed to shores of unthought silence;
Time, above me, within me, crashed its gongs
Of terrible warning, sifting the dust of death;
And here I lie. Blow now your horns of glory
Harshly over my flesh, you trees, you waters!
You stars and suns, Canopus, Deneb, Rigel,
Let me, as I lie down, here in this dust,
Hear, far off, your whispered salutation!
Roar now above my decaying flesh, you winds,
Whirl out your earth-scents over this body, tell me
Of ferns and stagnant pools, wild roses, hillsides!
Anoint me, rain, let crash your silver arrows
On this hard flesh! I am the one who named you,
I lived in you, and now I die in you.
I your son, your daughter, treader of music,
Lie, broken, conquered. . . . Let me not fall in silence.

III

I, the restless one; the circler of circles;
Herdsman and roper of stars, who could not capture
The secret of self; I who was tyrant to weaklings,
Striker of children; destroyer of women; corrupter

Of innocent dreamers, and laugher at beauty; I,
Too easily brought to tears and weakness by music,
Baffled and broken by love, the helpless beholder
Of the war in my heart, of desire with desire, the struggle
Of hatred with love, terror with hunger; I
Who laughed without knowing the cause of my laughter, who grew
Without wishing to grow, a servant to my own body;
Loved without reason the laughter and flesh of a woman,
Enduring such torments to find her! I who at last
Grow weaker, struggle more feebly, relent in my purpose,
Choose for my triumph an easier end, look backward
At earlier conquests; or, caught in the web, cry out
In a sudden and empty despair, "Tetélestai!"
Pity me, now! I, who was arrogant, beg you!
Tell me, as I lie down, that I was courageous.
Blow horns of victory now, as I reel and am vanquished.
Shatter the sky with trumpets above my grave.

IV

. . . Look! this flesh how it crumbles to dust and is blown!
These bones, how they grind in the granite of frost and are nothing!
This skull, how it yawns for a flicker of time in the darkness,
Yet laughs not and sees not! It is crushed by a hammer of sunlight,
And the hands are destroyed. . . . Press down through the leaves of the jasmine,
Dig through the interlaced roots—nevermore will you find me;
I was no better than dust, yet you cannot replace me. . . .
Take the soft dust in your hand—does it stir: does it sing?
Has it lips and a heart? Does it open its eyes to the sun?
Does it run, does it dream, does it burn with a secret, or tremble
In terror of death? Or ache with tremendous decisions? . . .
Listen! . . . It says: "I lean by the river. The willows
Are yellowed with bud. White clouds roar up from the south
And darken the ripples; but they cannot darken my heart,
Nor the face like a star in my heart! . . . Rain falls on the water
And pelts it, and rings it with silver. The willow trees glisten,

The sparrow chirps under the eaves; but the face in my heart
Is a secret of music. . . . I wait in the rain and am silent."
Listen again! . . . It says: "I have worked, I am tired,
The pencil dulls in my hand; I see through the window
Walls upon walls of windows with faces behind them,
Smoke floating up to the sky, an ascension of sea-gulls.
I am tired. I have struggled in vain, my decision was fruitless,
Why then do I wait? with darkness, so easy, at hand! . . .
But tomorrow, perhaps. . . . I will wait and endure till to-
morrow!" . . .
Or again: "It is dark. The decision is made. I am vanquished
By terror of life. The walls mount slowly about me
In coldness. I had not the courage. I was forsaken.
I cried out, was answered by silence . . . Tetélestai! . . ."

V

Hear how it babbles!—Blow the dust out of your hand,
With its voices and visions, tread on it, forget it, turn home-
ward
With dreams in your brain. . . . This, then, is the humble,
the nameless,—
The lover, the husband and father, the struggler with shadows,
The one who went down under shoutings of chaos, the weak-
ling
Who cried his "forsaken!" like Christ on the darkening hill-
top! . . .
This, then, is the one who implores, as he dwindles to silence,
A fanfare of glory. . . . And which of us dares to deny him?

HERVEY ALLEN

Hervey Allen (William Hervey Allen, Jr.) was born December 8, 1889, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He received his early education in the city of his birth, attended the U. S. Naval Academy, but resigned before graduating; received his B.S. in Economics at Pittsburgh in 1915, and took special courses at Harvard 1921-1922. He saw military service as Second Lieutenant of Infantry on the Mexican border in 1916 and as First Lieutenant with the A.E.F. in France, where he was seriously wounded in August, 1918. Returning to America that year, he drifted South. From 1919 to 1924 he lived in Charleston, South Carolina, and while

there wrote *Carolina Chansons* (1922) in collaboration with DuBose Heyward. With Heyward he founded The Poetry Society of South Carolina and assisted in awakening interest in poetry through the South.

Two volumes of Allen's had already appeared: *Wampum and Old Gold* (1921) and *The Bride of Huitzil* (1922), the most distinguished feature of the former being a war ballad, "The Blindman," an annual prize being offered in commemoration of this poem. Allen's *Earth Moods and Other Poems* (1925), is by far his most arresting presentation. This collection displays Allen as more than a local poet. The major part of the volume is devoted to long poems which attempt to express the evolutionary struggle from nebulous matter to man. The treatment is half epical, half legendary, and though as yet Allen's aim exceeds his grasp, there is a definiteness of execution in such poems as "The Saga of Lief the Lucky" and "Funeral at High Tide." The "other poems" are shorter and more compactly colored; "Gargantuana" and "Whim Alley" being particularly effective examples of Allen's ability to make decorations which do not suffer from picturesque affectations.

New Legends (1929) is the outcome of five years' research and immersion in the Bermuda islands. It is divided into three parts, the keenest being the sections entitled "Legends" and "Lines on the Imagination." At present Allen stands at the cross-roads: he has the possibilities of being either a lyricist or a writer of ambitious epics.

Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe (1926) is a remarkable work of research and re-creation. These two volumes of faithful biography furnish an excellent complement to the psychoanalytical study of Poe by Joseph Wood Krutch.

WHIM ALLEY

Whim Alley once led into Danger Court
Loud with the raucous talk of cockatoos,
Where bearded Jews a-squat in alcove shops
Sat waiting like royal falcons in a mews.
Softly as rain the voweled Portuguese
Fell from their red-ripe lips with eastern news
Of galleons whose names were melodies—
Softly—between the shrieks of cockatoos.
Who cared for royal navigation laws
In Danger Court—for what the Soldan said—
Or papal lines between the east and west?

Abram out-Shylocked Isaac with applause,
And clutched the sweated doubloons to his chest,
Whose late lamented owners were scarce dead.
For there were smugglers' bargains to be made
Where leaping arches looped along the walls,
While sunlight smoldered down the long arcade
And dizened into flame on Spanish shawls,
And what the sequin brought in Louis d'or
Was news,—and rumors passed from Trebizond,
While Rachel clinked brass anklets in a door
With a straight glimpse of blue sea just beyond.
Dark sailors passed with tang of wine and tar,
And merchants with wide hats and wider fringes,
And two black Sambos smoked the same cigar
Upon a chest with three locks and five hinges.
Vanished in air! Those arches roof a cow,
To parrots' rings the frowsy hens resort;
Whim Alley leads to less than nothing now,
And only shadows dwell in Danger Court.

GARGANTUANA

Gargantuan ranges of blue-dappled hills
Roll down titanic coasts of cobalt shires,
While inland dreams a sunstruck city's ghost,
Streaked with the level scarfs from temple fires.
Down, down the hills a bull-voiced waterfall
Plunges from cloudy cliffs that climb so high,
It echoes like an organ from a hall
Of stairs that wind into the windy sky.
And there are monstrous footprints in the sand
That twist up rusty roadways red as snakes
Onto an upland paved with level floors
Of copper water stagnant in iron lakes.
And hooded peaks vault into clouded wonder
From whence the island's voice rolls out to sea,
Reverberating words of blatant thunder,
Dull as a demon's glee.
Its hills sequester meadows walled with fire,
On which like evil prayers the sphinxes lie,
With flame-like plumes that bloom upon their wings,

While red clouds wither by—
The roc has made his nest among the cliffs,
And in the evening from a mountain's dome,
Remote as thought, there blurs the sound of drums
That call the giants home.

JAMES WHALER

James Whaler was born May 5, 1889, in Wilmington, Delaware. His parents came from Maryland and Pennsylvania with no city backgrounds anywhere until the family reached Wilmington. Young Whaler attended the Wilmington Friends' School and graduated from Princeton University, from which he received a doctor's degree for a work on Miltonic simile. Paying hard for his education, he worked in many capacities until he became head of a Nature Study class at the Minnesota State Teachers' College and Instructor of English at Goucher College, Baltimore.

His first impulse to write poetry came when he found himself in the depths of Maine woods in 1922, but Whaler was thirty-eight before his first book, *Hale's Pond* (1927), was published. The volume attracted little notice; beyond two or three perfunctory reviews, there was no critical consideration of the six long narratives comprising this strange work. But though few copies of the book were sold, rumors of its quality seemed to spread by grapevine telegraph; here a surprised critic and there an unprofessional enthusiast spoke up for the coiled vigor of "Runaway," "Jordan," "Monsieur Pipereau." This was New England with a difference. Purporting to be the poetry of the Maine woods, it was the very antithesis of the *plein-air*-afoot-through-the-great-outdoors sort of verse to which the Wanderlust school had accustomed us. Instead of pedestrian platitudes, here were ideas as novel as their idiom; instead of dilutions of sentiment, here were emotional and verbal richness.

This luxuriance, at first commendable, is Whaler's chief handicap for it leads him to pile figure upon figure, pack word against word until his line becomes congested. So, too, his utterance, strained to its emotional capacity, tends to be pitched an octave too high. But Whaler might well be calling attention to a kind of Yankee we have forgotten. Understatement is characteristic of one type of New Englander; there is another—and as genuine a type—who, when he speaks, speaks too loudly with the abrupt release of long suppressions. The very knots and congestions, as well as the intense key of Whaler's verse, result from an endeavor to express the person who, when he talks, cries out his thought

and who, when a poet, is likely to forget restraint. Whaler's faults are the faults of excess, not those of insufficiency, and, though here and there he shows the danger of knowing the woods too well, his men and women come first. He can—and does—draw the fine line between the incidental and the inevitable.

In varying degrees, all the long poems exhibit this power to seize on the significant-trivial, none better than "Monsieur Pipereau." In some ways this poem is the author's chief triumph, for here, without preamble or apology, Whaler calmly rewrites one of the world's most popular poems. "Monsieur Pipereau" is, plot for plot, detail for detail, Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin" translated to a lumber-camp in Maine. But instead of being overcome by the comparison, the reader forgets the American's audacity, even—after the first page or two—forgets the original. All he recognizes, all he remembers is the opulence and vitality of narration, the easy naturalizing of the supernatural.

"Runaway" and "Jordan" are no less remarkable. Though the former has moments of confused mysticism, the descriptions are keen, the concentrations are always surprising and accurate. This is a verse familiar in scene yet strange in spite of the homely speech. Following Wordsworth's pronouncement, it reaffirms the contention that poetry can talk as well as sing.

THE POND

(*From "Runaway"*)

Shadowed in midnight green,
Wedging her belly down a wide ravine,
Pinned by birch-silver to a bed of umber,
Her splay-claws lax, vibrating with her slumber,
No moon to bathe her eyes
And wake her, warn her that a storm would rise,—
Hale's Pond I felt before me in an hour
By thick black scents of fish and fern and flower.
I rested on the "Dock"—
Two split logs slapping at a foundered rock
Where lichen-paint dripped into lily-wire;
Here often had I dived through June's wet fire,
Here often had I crawled a chill ooze-bed,
With frog-palms, trout-eyes, chest ribbed round with lead.

For Father, when he had a cider-bout,
And in the shame of it, would send me out

To weed—then dive instead, and shout and swim
Till sun-slope and the black cows' milking-hymn!
Was I not muskrat, water-snake, raccoon?
Was I not dragon-fly and diving loon?
Polliwog, dreaming under lily-pads?
Victor of song in frog-olympiads?
Crawfish investigating runes of stone?
Minnow of sucking glass and glassy bone?
I flamed a water-beetle's fat vermilion,
I joined the water-striders' cool cotillion;
I made my body calamus for thin
Silk fish to nibble at me, toe to chin;
And once, while I was floating like a mink,
Straight in my face a doe looked down to drink!
I saw my soul burn in her golden eyes,
Globed among ecstasies!
I caught her breath above a pickerel-bloom:
It was black plum and russet-mild mushroom.
But best of all, eyes fish-wide, six feet under,
Breasting the veil between two worlds asunder,
I measured measureless
And moving calm, fin-naked gentleness
Of sunlight, and I heard an ocean boom
Afar, and my soul's treasure disentomb.

MONSIEUR PIPEREAU

The worst camp-life man ever lived? That season
Up near Seboomook. Couldn't been worse. The reason?
Rats! Big enough rats to circumcise wildcats,
Sociable, devastating democrats,
Under the bunkhouse, up above the ceiling,
Under the cook-room, and forever squealing
Under the stables, through the manger-racks,
Round every bale of hay in herds and packs,
Under manure-piles, sawdust, shingles, sacks,
Kegs, harness, grease-pots, axle-trees, ropes, jacks,
Under our blankets, under our very backs,
Until that whole camp looked like maniacs!
For days big Simmons couldn't stoop his head:
Rats bit him in the neck one night in bed.

Nadeau got out his rosary and prayed
Currying his horses, he was so afraid;
And once I even saw him make his mare
Kneel down beside him in the straw for prayer.
Rogers, the foreman, had them send us traps
From Bangor: cages with invisible snaps
And flaps to hold a dozen, traps of steel
Whose center-plates would crash at a grasshopper's heel:
Flat-traps of maple, circle-traps of wire,
Traps built to serve mankind and to inspire,—
We had a hundred and seven traps all told;
And every brand of poison-mixture sold.
Ever study rats?—You'll take them by surprise
Once—no! not even once! No trap, how wise
Or simple, fools a rat in his right mind!
First day, caught ten—the deaf and dumb and blind;
And the first night six more—the sick and lean;
And next day none—making in all sixteen.
"Five cents per head!" Rogers announced that night.
Vainly imagining we could strike the light
Of inspiration, were there bounty to it,—
Lord! we'd have paid him ten per head to do it!
One way was left: rifles with powder and lead:
Shooting them from the rafters overhead
By lantern-glow; but almost all objected—
Preferring rats to one shot misdirected;
And when a bullet killed a laying-fowl
Of Mrs. Grove's, our cook, we heard a howl
That went into the food she fed us. RATS!
As it grew cold they took to shoes and hats.
I woke one morning minus watch and vest:
Some rat's idea to improve his nest.

Now Rogers and his wife, and Mrs. Grove
Her sister, had a cabin—with its drove
Of rats—all separate from ours. One night
We brought him final word we'd lost the fight,
Would have to quit, and asked to draw our pay.
But Rogers said: "Boys, hold it one more day.
I share this hell you're in that's worse than war.
We got 'em bad here too—just one day more!

Haven't talked much, but I've a large surprise
For this whole camp tomorrow. Shine your eyes
To see dead rats tomorrow—dead ones!—do y'hear?
Listen to what our Super writes: 'Monsieur
Bernard de Pipereau from Canada,
Expert in shrews, rats, mice, et cetera,
Will reach Seboomook Thursday. As to fee,
No more than forty for his guarantee.
Tom Rogers, hold the men! Write, let us know.'
Well, what are you grinning at? This Pipereau
Is known in Brunswick.—Men, we are in luck!
That's right, stay on one day, and if the ruck
Of these eternal vermin ain't in hell
By Saturday, then, by God! I'll pull the bell
To quit! But if that Canadian's what I say,
Then holiday
On me at Joe's, and pay goes on the same!"
Even while he argued, up the window-frame
Inside—behind him—slouched a long slick rat.
Big Simmons nearly cried. "We don't want that,"
Said nervous Nadeau. "Ain't we had enough
Holidays every night? It's another bluff!"
Yet Rogers spoke so meek and fair and certain
You never had found the devil himself deserting.
"Of course you doubt me, boys, but that's not odd—
Doubt—honest doubt's the noblest work of God!"
"Yes, but a rat ain't!" wheezed old Shorty Myer,
Who set all laughing, as we slipped back sprier,
To dream in ratland one more day and night.

Next noon, accoutered as a wizard might
From Lapland if a parliament of witches
Should send to Maine for a heap of flesh and riches,
The doctor came that Rogers promised—just
Floated to camp through arches of snow-dust,
And, galloping to messhouse, on a long
Stallion that snorted an Icelandic song,
He reined up in the center of a ring
Of men. We hailed him as our saviour-king.
But not till Tom came running with a grin,
Would he slide from the saddle and go in,

Leaving his horse in a long muzzle of steam
Snapping a drift with vicious teeth of cream.
Rogers came round and introduced.
"The boys—
Be pleased to meet the boys."
"Ah! rat annoys
Such beeg, beeg men! I show you how you kill."
We sat down on the dinner-benches, still
Sizing the stranger up, some not through eating;
And other men came in, looked, passed no greeting,
For something strange was in the air: the oak
Logs on the hearth seemed damp and turned to smoke.

"The devil for looks!" said Shorty Myer low,
"He'd give a porcupine the vertigo!"
Nose long and thin, and eyes that never saw
The thing outside without its inside flaw.
Hair long and thin, ears long, cheeks thin and taper,
With the complexion of last year's newspaper;
Long thin mustaches and some spears of thin
Long bristles reddish-gray from a long chin.
That Frenchman's eyes wheeled round and hypnotized us:
Oh, there's no miracle would have surprised us
More than the thing he did! He sent a bench
Of men to the other end; and, like the French,
Talked with his elbows till he cleared a corner;
Then squats before us like a dying mourner,
And, with long hands as stiff as cant-dog hooks,
He pulls a board away, and looks and looks
At two small rat-holes, motioning us be still:
I tell you not a body moved a gill.
Even Mrs. Grove held up her pan of beans
Steaming, but felt no heat or weight.—Such scenes
We think we dream in.—*Wee, wee-wee, hsts-hsts,*
Hsts-hsts, wee-wee! and, like ventriloquists,
He whistled so that cries were overhead,
Were underfoot, came from a box of bread.
Now feet were heard to patter under bench
And table; and the men began to blench.
He made a sound like tuning-forks from June
Mosquitoes, till that winter afternoon

Turned for the moment green, the snow was gone,
And birds began to whistle through the dawn.
We saw no longer human lips and teeth
On him who charmed those vermin underneath:
The motion of the music in his face
Made all his body tremble, and displace
The human by a beast—or worse than that:
The men close by him shrunk away,—a RAT!
And then he threw his brown coat round him like
A tent; his lightning-fingers gave a strike,
A shake, and, with a little laugh of French,
He tossed a dead rat to an empty bench.
The stable-kid began to cry hurrah,
But Pipereau turned black, and waved his claw,—
Seemed to congeal poor Joey's underjaw.
But Mrs. Grove, the pan pressed to her heart,
Murmured to Mrs. Rogers: "Ain't he smart!"
Close by the other hole once more he drew;
Whistling, he spread his coat for number two,
Flipped him to death with two invisible pinches,
And tossed him to Rogers,—a beast of eighteen inches
From tooth to tail-tip—longer than the first:
Tom Rogers grabbed the tails of both and cursed,
And pitched them to the fireplace nose in,
To test if they were real or he was dozing.

The Frenchman stood full height and said, "Plentee!
You have plentee and clevair rats—oui, oui!"
Then Rogers asked his terms. Quarter per head—
These first two free. Or, one gross sum instead,
And we'd be cured of rats in a day and night.
"One hundred dollars and I do it right!"
The price turned Rogers pale. "That is a great
Pile in this country, friend. It's not the rate
Named in this letter from my Company!—
No more than forty for his guarantee."
"*Cor*rect! One hundred is ze lowest price
To kill or drife away all rats and mice;
But forty more—I *guarantee* you, men:
Zey leafe to *leafe,* and never come again!"

Tom whispered with his wife. . . . "That's reasonable,
Doctor," he said. "There's not an obstacle
To hinder here: we'll follow all you say
If you can rid our camp in a night and day."

. . . . . .

John Heald came hobbling from the cook-house. "Yep!
Rats have resigned! All night he made 'em step!"

"Ah, ah! Ze good time wiz ze boys?" Outside
Tom's cabin Pipereau left his horse untied.
Then as they talked within we boys leaned to.
"How, doctor, can you *prove* your job is through?
Suppose when you're gone tonight we find rats still?—
We've lost one hundred forty! What *proof* will
We ask? This: we take twenty buttered rolls,
And with them plug up twenty cook-room holes;
Take twenty squares of cheese, and lay a square
On every mess-room bench and table and chair.
The air's not cold outside—all hands can wait
Till seven o'clock. Then we'll inspect the bait."
"Eh bien! Oui, oui!"

At once the thing was done.
The Frenchman, bundled like a skeleton,
Wove round and round the camp a savage, quick
Canter that showed his horse knew every trick.
For two sharp hours he rode, while Rogers walked
Among his men around a fire and talked.
The moon was near the full, the woods were deep
With ghostly lights like any sick man's sleep.
John Heald, on crutches, shook his beard in two
Telling us what he saw that Frenchman do
When he looked through a keyhole. "Had a pipe,"
He said, "thin as the leg-bone of a snipe—
And on that pipe he trilled in graveyard pitch
The damnedest tunes! They would have laid a witch!
These tunes I *saw!* Brown smoke! which snaked its way
Down every chink and hole where rats can stay!
God help what falls into that Frenchman's clutches!
You think I dreamt, Tom! Never! Took up crutches
At twelve o'clock, and hobbled toward the barn,
Where, through a hole, what did I see, by darn!

But that horse eating in the moonlight there
Live rats as if it was a regular fare!
Live rats! I tell you not a one was dead
Until that stallion grabbed it by its head!
That pipe's peculiar music has such force
It sends those rats all racing for the horse,
Greedy to gaze into that horse's eye!
I saw them coming one by one—to die!
Endless processions—two and sometimes three
Rat-giants at once would stand up patiently
Waiting to catch that horse's eye! And they
Would mew like kittens playing in the hay.
Once Pipereau came in—I am no liar!—
And Tom, those two rats you threw in the fire?
He brought 'em alive and well, to feed that horse!
It must have been the brute's five-hundredth course!
And then that Frenchman drew a rat-skin bag
Out of the saddle somewhere: such a swag!
Oh, such a swag! Gold coins and ruby globes!
Diamonds of folded fires like folded robes!
And little images of glowworm light—
I left off looking, I shook so for fright:
I'd only strength to make my bunk-room, lock
The door, and listen for the crowing cock.
I don't see how those women dared to serve
Meals to that rat!—They beat us men for nerve!
Oh, I forgot to tell about some stuff
I saw him take—" But Rogers cried, "Enough!
An interesting dream, John, that will keep!
See here, it's seven! It's business now, not sleep!"

And Pipereau was waiting with a yawn,
And a laughing wink that all our rats were gone.
He held the pail to pick up rolls and cheese
While Tom preceded, swinging lantern and keys.
Back they came arguing.
"I tell you flat,
Doctor, you haven't killed us *every* rat!
You saw me lay the bait—but here's nineteen,
No more than nineteen rolls! And you saw clean

White squares of cheese I cut: but these lack three
Of making twenty! And the rest, you see,
Are all gnawed through! And at my very door
An apple's gone that you saw there before!
By contract, must I pay you anything
At all?—Here, take this forty, covering
All rats you killed and all you might have killed
Had you but had more time—or been more skilled."
The Frenchman clenched the bills and ground his teeth
Jabbering a lightning lingo underneath
His chest, that shivered in the furs he wore;
And from the *dieu's* he brew I guessed he swore.
He leaped so quick upon the stallion that
We jumped, imagining a bloody rat!
He leaped so arrowy we thought he strode
The great moon that had risen from the road;
And the free stallion, treading clouds of snow,
Cut sharp that moon into a cameo,
While all was silent but our hearts. that shook.
Tom cried, "I'm through forever with that crook!"
We ate in silence.

Never was there bliss
Like ours that night! Oh, never night like this
In Rogers' camp! Dreamless and oathless—ratless!
No one to wake and find a wardrobe hatless,
Bootless or shoeless! Night so overpowering
Peaceful I woke while yet the moon was towering.
There lay the men like innocents new-born,
Some barely breathing, others blowing horn
Or bowing violins of wood and silk.
Not since these men had quit their mothers' milk
Was such content. I lit a pipe to think,
And walked out to the shed to get a drink,
When in the moonlight I could see Nadeau
Standing outside the doorway in the snow.
"Just like a nursery, ain't it!"
"God, it's that!
But didn't you hear some time ago a cat?"
"It's just from listening to John Heald's words

Last night, Nadeau; but John dreams dreams—and lies.
The plague is over! Frenchy takes the prize!
He's galloped to the moon with all his rats!"
We both turned in and slept like autocrats.

Of all days for calamity—Sunday! Black
Sunday it was in Rogers' almanac!
We boys awoke that morning with a shout
Of bliss: the rats were banished without doubt!—
Each of us glowing like a god of Rome,
Or like the wandering boy that's welcomed home.
Thermometer ten above,—just comfortable
To renovate our camp from stove to stall.
Now business first on Sundays was to shave
Or bathe, or both—but to do both was brave;
Yet every man this morning called for tub
And water, till we looked a swimming-club.
What if a wind had crossed the rising sun,
And flakes as round as quarters had begun
To quilt the roofs with whiter wool?—I say
Paradise gave up its morning to our day.

Well, I was raking off my beard for fair
At McIlvenny's mirror, and the air
Was being lit with hymns from twenty faces,
Nadeau's fine tenor up above the basses
In his pet lullaby, "Fair Infidel,"
And all were starving for the breakfast-bell,—
When on a sudden every note went flat!
I dropped my razor, nervous as a cat.
Some one was hollering in Rogers' house!
We opened doors to hear him.
"Cook's heraus!"
Called Al Lemure. Then Rogers burst in—hat
And coat off, bald head blue with cold. "That rat!
That French rat, boys!"
Well, late that night before,
His wife and Mrs. Grove unlocked their door,
All clad for travel—furs and gloves and hoods,—
Ran from the moonlight into the deep woods,
And up behind that Frenchman on that horse
They were now flying.—"God knows what their course!

Though you could still see footprints where they ran,
This new snow covers up that Frenchman's plan!
It's Pipereau's witchcraft—that rat Pipereau!—
And eight hours' start in all this world of snow!"

"Boys!" cried big Simmons, "is there road or trail,
Mountain or pond or stream or swamp or swale
Round here but we know better 'n a love-letter?
Wherever Tom's wife is I say we get her!"
"And bring the cook back too!" cried Al Lemure.

Well, up and down and round Moosehead we sure
Did spread the tidings of that Pipereau.
Some went to Greenville, Rogers through the snow
Drove clear to Foxcroft, and till Wednesday night,
As we'd agreed, we trailed that Frenchman's flight.
Whatever were the footprints, all led south,
Or we'd have mushed it to the St. Lawrence mouth.
Tom tried the law; but lawyers urged, of course,
One hundred dollars for a quick divorce.
Oh, Maine is broad, but Canada is broader:
That Frenchman, once he loped across the border,
Could have set sail to Lapland with his riches,
Or galloped there between a brace of witches.
Neither his wife nor cook Tom saw again,
Nor Pipereau, though trailed by many men.

Hear to the end: there's still a funeral;
For when Tom lost his wife, that was not all.
By Wednesday night we were too fagged to pull
Boots from our feet or speak a syllable.
Staggered and haggard like a wreck of drunks,
We fell, with no undressing, on our bunks,
Wind-broken dogs from shoeing through that snow—
And neither Frenchman, wife, nor cook to show.
And yet one comfort mightily surpassed
Our toil: we had a ratless camp at last!—
Oh, think of coming home to sleep, sleep, sleep
Without one prayer to God our souls to keep!
With such a hope one man can fight like ten;
Eagles can harbor in the heart of a wren.

Pure slumber to the muscles of my hair,
I fell to dreaming I had shot a bear,
When a volcano's voice shook through my bed:
"Rats! Rats! Rats! Rats!—They're back!—They're near my head"!
The moon burnt frosty through the panes of glass,
Annealing rafters to a milky brass,
Daubed everywhere with shadows big as cats—
RATS!
Tremendous teams and troupes of acrobats,
Chewing on harness and on leather puttees,
On snow-shoe straps as if it were on cheese.
I saw their eyes like little jeweled moons
Arching from rope to rope in glad festoons.
And under-floor I heard the pattering pests,—
The old full families squealing in their nests.
Wherever ear could listen there was gnawing
And clawing and pawing and chawing and wild seesawing.
A trunk that held my only Sunday suit
Was being investigated by one brute;
Two more I watched climb out of Mac's new shoes;
Nowhere in sight but they were working in twos
Where there'd been one before that Frenchman came.
Mac, with his gun out now, was taking aim.
"You'll wake up Rogers, Mac; don't waste your shell!"
Flump! The anatomies of dead rats fell
Over a dozen bunks—and then the room was hell!
The rats took cover while the lead kept flying;—
No use if Rogers had come pacifying;
The boys let powder loose at every hole
And shadow where they saw that Frenchman's soul.
At length ten minutes' peace, then hordes on hordes
Came swarming back to the same beams and boards.
We shot the roof into a sieve for snow
To cover up the flesh of rats below;
We shook that roof into a storm of flakes
Which melted on the bunks in crimson lakes.
A blizzard underneath the moon was that!
A battlefield of wild-man versus rat!
And all that night Tom Rogers staid away,
But we'd hear bullets fired and ricochet

Inside his cabin, and we wished him well:
We knew his heaven, like ours, had turned to hell.

If, near Seboomook, on a rise of loose
Green bowlders and a single stand of spruce
And pine, you stumble on a ruined camp,
Find bits of bone around a broken lamp,
And shingles made of little holes,—begone!
Unless you are a wizard or a faun,
Oh, crave no harbor here for any night!
For in one hour of the fall of light
You will see life that Pharaoh did not see,
You will arise and shake—and you will flee
To cast your couch with dews and moss and rocks,
Lonelier than a woodrat, lonelier than a fox.

CLAUDE McKAY

Claude McKay was born in Jamaica, West Indies, in 1889. He had, as he says, "no education" except what instruction he received from his brother. For a while he was in the service of the Kingston Constabulary. He came to the United States in 1912 and was a student of agriculture at the Kansas State College. After leaving school McKay tried to earn his living with varying success on Pullman cars, in kitchens, as a menial in hotels. Meanwhile, he had been writing, and some of his more belligerent verse had attracted the attention of a few literary radicals. In 1920 he became connected with *The Liberator* and, shortly thereafter, was made associate editor.

Songs of Jamaica, his first immature volume, was published while McKay was still in Jamaica; his second and more characteristic *Spring in New Hampshire* was published by Grant Richards in London in 1920. The best of both volumes with many more recent poems appear in *Harlem Shadows* (1922), with an introduction by Max Eastman. Here the pure-blooded Negro speaks with a boldness in curious contrast to the sentimental dialect verse which used to be affected by most of his race. His melodies are instinctive, the naked force of his invectives is deep.

Home to Harlem (1928) and *Banjo* (1929), subtitled "A Story Without a Plot," are novels in which realism and impressionism project vivid character studies against foreign and native backgrounds.

IF WE MUST DIE

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

Oh, kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but—fighting back!

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Christopher (Darlington) Morley was born at Haverford, Pennsylvania, May 5, 1890. He graduated from Haverford College in 1910 and was Rhodes Scholar at New College, Oxford, England, 1910-13.

Since 1914 he has been on the staff of various periodicals, coming to New York in 1920 to run his column ("The Bowling Green") on the New York *Evening Post,* subsequently joining the staff of *The Saturday Review of Literature.* In 1927, he and Cleon Throckmorton took over two old theaters in Hoboken, reviving the successes of previous decades and establishing the last sea-coast of New York's literary Bohemia.

Morley is the author of more than thirty dissimilar volumes of essays, skits, gossip, travel-notes, light verse and serious poetry. His most distinguished volume, *Where the Blue Begins* (1922), is a prose fantasy which is both excellent nonsense and dexterous satire. *Thunder on the Left* (1925) strikes deeper if less unusual chords.

As a writer of serious poetry, Morley has less to say. *The Rocking Horse* (1919), *Hide and Seek* (1920) and *Chimneysmoke* (1922) sink too often in their own sentiments; their sweetness is frequently cloying, their charm too conscious. But Morley's vigor energizes his lines and prevents many of his verses—especially

those in the latter volume—from becoming tawdry, while his technique saves them from the fatuity of their own subjects.

QUICKENING

Such little, puny things are words in rhyme:
  Poor feeble loops and strokes as frail as hairs;
You see them printed here, and mark their chime,
  And turn to your more durable affairs.
  Yet on such petty tools the poet dares
To run his race with mortar, bricks and lime,
  And draws his frail stick to the point, and stares
To aim his arrow at the heart of Time.

Intangible, yet pressing, hemming in,
  This measured emptiness engulfs us all,
And yet he points his paper javelin
  And sees it eddy, waver, turn, and fall,
And feels, between delight and trouble torn,
The stirring of a sonnet still unborn.

TO A POST-OFFICE INKWELL

How many humble hearts have dipped
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!
Have shared their secrets, told their cares,
Their curious and quaint affairs!

Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen,
Have moved the lives of unborn men,
And watched young people, breathing hard,
Put Heaven on a postal card.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

Edna St. Vincent Millay was born February 22, 1892, in Rockland, Maine. After a childhood spent in her native State, she attended Vassar College, from which she was graduated in 1917. Coming to New York, she supported herself by writing short stories under various pseudonyms (*Distressing Dialogues*, 1924, being published under the name of "Nancy Boyd"), translating songs, acting with the Provincetown Players in the capacity of playwright and performer. After her marriage to Eugene Boissevain,

she moved to a farm in the Berkshires which she leaves only to deliver occasional readings.

Her first long poem, "Renascence," was the outstanding feature of *The Lyric Year* (1912), an anthology which revealed many new names. "Renascence" was written when Miss Millay was scarcely nineteen; it remains one of the most remarkable poems of this generation. Beginning like a casual aimless rhyme, it proceeds, with calm lucidity, to an amazing climax. It is as if a child had, in the midst of ingenuousness, uttered some terrific truth. The cumulative power of this poem is surpassed only by its passages of individual beauty.

Renascence, Miss Millay's first volume, was published in 1917. It sounds, at intervals, the same passion as its title poem; here is a hunger for beauty so intense that no delight can appease it. Such poems as "God's World" and a few of the unnamed sonnets, capturing the breathless awe of "Renascence" in a smaller compass, vibrate with similar rapture.

A Few Figs From Thistles (originally published in 1920 and revised several times since then), although one of Miss Millay's most popular collections, is her least commendable performance. In many of these self-conscious flippancies, Miss Millay has exchanged her poetic birthright for a mess of cleverness. There are a few poems which are worthy of her calling, but the greater part of this volume smirks with a facile sophistication, admiring its own pertly cynical pirouettes.

Second April (1921) is a return to the triumph of her first book. In spite of certain lapses in which the poet seems to have adopted a fixed simper, *Second April* expresses that passion for identification with all of life which few poets in her generation have surpassed; she has made ecstasy articulate and almost tangible. A new note, new at least for this singer, creeps into the lyrics, the note of gravity; here is dignity, almost an austerity, of emotion. In her inversions and archaic epithets, her "forsooths" and "alacks," Miss Millay seems to be a belated Elizabethan; she uses locutions which ordinarily have a false and affected ring. Far from marring her work, these antique accents suit the light banter of "The Bean-Stalk," as well as the intensity of "The Poet and His Book," and the unforgettable "Elegy."

Three plays were published in 1921: *Two Slatterns and a King,* "a moral interlude" in adroit couplets, *The Lamp and the Bell,* a five-act drama which is a strange composite of native speech and Shakespearean echoes, and *Aria Da Capo,* a one-act play which, for all its brevity, is a profound satire on war and war-makers.

The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems (1924) wears its author's heart on its sleeve; often, in fact, that responsive organ is dis-

played as a shining bauble, a decoration tricked with frayed ribbons. But here Miss Millay begins to wear her heart with a difference. Rarely now is she narcissistic or consciously arch; she speaks with a disillusion that contains more than a tinge of bitterness. Love, she announces, sometimes with a wry wistfulness, sometimes with a proud scorn, is not enough. If, she tells us, it is hard never to attain one's desires, it is even more painful to have them fulfilled. This change of key makes *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems* Miss Millay's most uneven collection. The title-poem, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1922, barely saves itself from sentimentality; the irritating coyness of "The Return from Town" is offset by the lyric stab of "Autumn Chant." But the twenty-two sonnets which comprise Part Four of this book are not only representative of Miss Millay's best, but are among the finest modern examples of the form.

In spite of ill-health, Miss Millay devoted the summer of 1926 to a work which had been contracted for. In Santa Fé, she completed *The King's Henchman,* the libretto of an opera composed by Deems Taylor, which was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House early in 1927. Occasional poems had appeared in magazines, betraying the fact that though her verse was still quick with homely facts of people and seasons, the gay impudence was no longer there; that she loved what she loved now not with variability nor desperation but with nostalgia. *The Buck in the Snow and Other Poems* (1928) is pitched in the key of loss. The heel-and-toe insouciance has disappeared; a new and more somber poet emerges from these pages. The happy vibrations of her early work have lengthened to a music that no longer celebrates eager dawn or headlong day but is tuned to the beginning of evening. Never has Miss Millay plucked so insistently on the autumnal string; never has she been so preoccupied with the water darkening, with the ceaseless "action of waves and the action of sorrow," with the lonely self, and the going down of "the sun that will not rise again." This is not to imply that the poet has become detached; Miss Millay's ecstasies are never abstract in the essential way that those of Léonie Adams are. Her metaphysics of passion remain personal; she is still too much in love with lost love, with the shards of her broken pot, with the memory of a world forgotten, with the spirit of persecution, the trodden grape, and the minutiae of unrelinquishing mortal mind. The mood is rarely anything but subjective and self-perturbed. Even so general a poem on death as "Morituris" proceeds from an undignified fear, a "shrieking to the south and clutching at the north."

Exception, however, must be made in the case of a small part of the volume, especially the group which brings the book to its

ascending close. The seven sonnets in *The Buck in the Snow* overcome the limitations of the poet as well as the limitations of the form. In "Sonnet to Gath" she has fashioned an irony far removed from impertinence; in "On Hearing a Symphony of Beethoven" she achieves the impossible, writing that rarest of things, a successful poem on a symphony, and holding, in fourteen lines, the music, the orchestra, the audience, and the triumphant catharsis which is Beethoven. Rising above its almost fatal first line, it turns inversions and generalities into a victory over rhetoric.

It is such authority of idea and utterance that makes one forget Miss Millay's too easily manipulated verse-making. It is the realization of a spirit beyond word-shaping that puts permanence into the best of her measures. At its height, her poetry reflects the paradox of its being: it is immediate and it is immutable.

RENASCENCE[1]

All I could see from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood;
I turned and looked another way,
And saw three islands in a bay.
So with my eyes I traced the line
Of the horizon, thin and fine,
Straight around till I was come
Back to where I'd started from;
And all I saw from where I stood
Was three long mountains and a wood.
Over these things I could not see;
These were the things that bounded me;
And I could touch them with my hand,
Almost, I thought, from where I stand.
And all at once things seemed so small
My breath came short, and scarce at all.
But, sure, the sky is big, I said;
Miles and miles above my head;
So here upon my back I'll lie
And look my fill into the sky.
And so I looked, and, after all,
The sky was not so very tall.

[1] The poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay are published by Harper & Brothers, and copyright by Edna St. Vincent Millay as acknowledged in the Foreword.

The sky, I said, must somewhere stop,
And—sure enough!—I see the top!
The sky, I thought, is not so grand;
I 'most could touch it with my hand!
And, reaching up my hand to try,
I screamed to feel it touch the sky.

I screamed, and—lo!—Infinity
Came down and settled over me;
Forced back my scream into my chest,
Bent back my arm upon my breast,
And, pressing of the Undefined
The definition on my mind,
Held up before my eyes a glass
Through which my shrinking sight did pass
Until it seemed I must behold
Immensity made manifold;
Whispered to me a word whose sound
Deafened the air for worlds around,
And brought unmuffled to my ears
The gossiping of friendly spheres,
The creaking of the tented sky,
The ticking of Eternity.

I saw and heard, and knew at last
The How and Why of all things, past,
And present, and forevermore.
The universe, cleft to the core,
Lay open to my probing sense
That, sickening, I would fain pluck thence
But could not,—nay! But needs must suck
At the great wound, and could not pluck
My lips away till I had drawn
All venom out.—Ah, fearful pawn!
For my omniscience I paid toll
In infinite remorse of soul.
All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall
Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust,
Mine every greed, mine every lust.
And all the while for every grief,

Each suffering, I craved relief
With individual desire,—
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire
About a thousand people crawl;
Perished with each,—then mourned for all!
A man was starving in Capri;
He moved his eyes and looked at me;
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,
And knew his hunger as my own.
I saw at sea a great fog-bank
Between two ships that struck and sank;
A thousand screams the heavens smote;
And every scream tore through my throat;
No hurt I did not feel, no death
That was not mine; mine each last breath
That, crying, met an answering cry
From the compassion that was I.
All suffering mine, and mine its rod;
Mine, pity like the pity of God.
Ah, awful weight! Infinity
Pressed down upon the finite me!
My anguished spirit, like a bird,
Beating against my lips I heard;
Yet lay the weight so close about
There was no room for it without.
And so beneath the weight lay I
And suffered death, but could not die.

Long had I lain thus, craving death,
When quietly the earth beneath
Gave way, and inch by inch, so great
At last had grown the crushing weight,
Into the earth I sank till I
Full six feet under ground did lie,
And sank no more,—there is no weight
Can follow here, however great.
From off my breast I felt it roll,
And as it went my tortured soul
Burst forth and fled in such a gust
That all about me swirled the dust.
Deep in the earth I rested now;
Cool is its hand upon the brow

And soft its breast beneath the head
Of one who is so gladly dead.
And all at once, and over all,
The pitying rain began to fall.
I lay and heard each pattering hoof
Upon my lowly, thatchèd roof.
And seemed to love the sound far more
Than ever I had done before.
For rain it hath a friendly sound
To one who's six feet underground;
And scarce the friendly voice or face:
A grave is such a quiet place.

The rain, I said, is kind to come
And speak to me in my new home.
I would I were alive again
To kiss the fingers of the rain,
To drink into my eyes the shine
Of every slanting silver line,
To catch the freshened, fragrant breeze
From drenched and dripping apple-trees.
For soon the shower will be done,
And then the broad face of the sun
Will laugh above the rain-soaked earth
Until the world with answering mirth
Shakes joyously, and each round drop
Rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.
How can I bear it; buried here,
While overhead the sky grows clear
And blue again after the storm?
O, multi-colored, multiform,
Beloved beauty over me,
That I shall never, never see
Again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold,
That I shall never more behold!
Sleeping your myriad magics through,
Close-sepulchered away from you!
O God, I cried, give me new birth,
And put me back upon the earth!
Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd
And let the heavy rain, down-poured

In one big torrent, set me free,
Washing my grave away from me!

I ceased; and, through the breathless hush
That answered me, the far-off rush
Of herald wings came whispering
Like music down the vibrant string
Of my ascending prayer, and—crash!
Before the wild wind's whistling lash
The startled storm-clouds reared on high
And plunged in terror down the sky,
And the big rain in one black wave
Fell from the sky and struck my grave.

I know not how such things can be,
I only know there came to me
A fragrance such as never clings
To aught save happy living things;
A sound as of some joyous elf
Singing sweet songs to please himself,
And, through and over everything,
A sense of glad awakening.
The grass, a tip-toe at my ear,
Whispering to me I could hear;
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips
Brushed tenderly across my lips,
Laid gently on my sealèd sight,
And all at once the heavy night
Fell from my eyes and I could see,—
A drenched and dripping apple-tree,
A last long line of silver rain,
A sky grown clear and blue again.
And as I looked a quickening gust
Of wind blew up to me and thrust
Into my face a miracle
Of orchard-breath, and with the smell,—
I know not how such things can be!—
I breathed my soul back into me.

Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I
And hailed the earth with such a cry

As is not heard save from a man
Who has been dead and lives again.
About the trees my arms I wound;
Like one gone mad I hugged the ground;
I raised my quivering arms on high;
I laughed and laughed into the sky,
Till at my throat a strangling sob
Caught fiercely, and a great heart-throb
Sent instant tears into my eyes;
O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.
I know the path that tells Thy way
Through the cool eve of every day;
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

THE PEAR TREE

In this squalid, dirty dooryard,
Where the chickens scratch and run,
White, incredible, the pear tree
Stands apart and takes the sun,

Mindful of the eyes upon it,
Vain of its new holiness,
Like the waste-man's little daughter
In her first communion dress.

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide gray skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with color! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

WILD SWANS

I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over;—
And what did I see I had not seen before?
Only a question less or a question more;
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying!
House without air! I leave you and lock your door!
Wild swans, come over the town, come over
The town again, trailing your legs and crying!

THE POET AND HIS BOOK

Down, you mongrel, Death!
Back into your kennel!
I have stolen breath
In a stalk of fennel!

You shall scratch and you shall whine
Many a night, and you shall worry
Many a bone, before you bury
One sweet bone of mine!

When shall I be dead?
When my flesh is withered,
And above my head
Yellow pollen gathered
All the empty afternoon?
When sweet lovers pause and wonder
Who am I that lie thereunder,
Hidden from the moon?

This my personal death?—
That my lungs be failing
To inhale the breath
Others are exhaling?
This my subtle spirit's end?—
Ah, when the thawed winter splashes
Over these chance dust and ashes,
Weep not me, my friend!

Me, by no means dead
In that hour, but surely
When this book, unread,
Rots to earth obscurely,
And no more to any breast,
Close against the clamorous swelling
Of the thing there is no telling,
Are these pages pressed!

When this book is mold,
And a book of many
Waiting to be sold
For a casual penny,
In a little open case,
In a street unclean and cluttered,
Where a heavy mud is spattered
From the passing drays,

Stranger, pause and look;
  From the dust of ages
Lift this little book,
  Turn the tattered pages,
Read me, do not let me die!
  Search the fading letters, finding
  Steadfast in the broken binding
All that once was I!

When these veins are weeds,
  When these hollowed sockets
Watch the rooty seeds
  Bursting down like rockets,
And surmise the spring again,
  Or, remote in that black cupboard,
  Watch the pink worms writhing upward
At the smell of rain,

Boys and girls that lie
  Whispering in the hedges,
Do not let me die,
  Mix me in your pledges;
Boys and girls that slowly walk
  In the woods, and weep, and quarrel,
  Staring past the pink wild laurel,
Mix me with your talk.

Do not let me die!
  Farmers at your raking,
When the sun is high,
  While the hay is making,
When, along the stubble strewn,
  Withering on their stalks uneaten,
  Strawberries turn dark and sweeten
In the lapse of noon;

Shepherds on the hills,
  In the pastures, drowsing
To the tinkling bells
  Of the brown sheep browsing;

Sailors crying through the storm;
  Scholars at your study; hunters
  Lost amid the whirling winter's
Whiteness uniform;

Men that long for sleep;
  Men that wake and revel;—
If an old song leap
  To your senses' level
At such moments, may it be
  Sometimes, though a moment only,
  Some forgotten, quaint and homely
Vehicle of me!

Women at your toil,
  Women at your leisure
Till the kettle boil,
  Snatch of me your pleasure,
Where the broom-straw marks the leaf;
  Women quiet with your weeping
  Lest you wake a workman sleeping,
Mix me with your grief!

Boys and girls that steal
  From the shocking laughter
Of the old, to kneel
  By a dripping rafter
Under the discolored eaves,
  Out of trunks with hingeless covers
  Lifting tales of saint and lovers,
Travelers, goblins, thieves,

Suns that shine by night,
  Mountains made from valleys,—
Bear me to the light,
  Flat upon your bellies
By the webby window lie,
  Where the little flies are crawling,—
  Read me, margin me with scrawling,
Do not let me die!

Sexton, ply your trade!
In a shower of gravel
Stamp upon your spade!
Many a rose shall ravel,
Many a metal wreath shall rust
In the rain, and I go singing
Through the lots where you are flinging
Yellow clay on dust!

JUSTICE DENIED IN MASSACHUSETTS[1]

Let us abandon then our gardens and go home
And sit in the sitting-room.
Shall the larkspur blossom or the corn grow under this cloud?
Sour to the fruitful seed
Is the cold earth under this cloud,
Fostering quack and weed, we have marched upon but cannot conquer;
We have bent the blades of our hoes against the stalks of them.

Let us go home, and sit in the sitting-room.
Not in our day
Shall the cloud go over and the sun rise as before,
Beneficent upon us
Out of the glittering bay,
And the warm winds be blown inward from the sea
Moving the blades of corn
With a peaceful sound.
Forlorn, forlorn,
Stands the blue hay-rack by the empty mow.
And the petals drop to the ground,
Leaving the tree unfruited.
The sun that warmed our stooping backs and withered the weed uprooted—
We shall not feel it again.
We shall die in darkness, and be buried in the rain.

What from the splendid dead
We have inherited—
Furrows sweet to the grain, and the weed subdued—

[1] Written after the final decision in the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

See now the slug and the mildew plunder.
Evil does overwhelm
The larkspur and the corn;
We have seen them go under.

Let us sit here, sit still,
Here in the sitting-room until we die;
At the step of Death on the walk, rise and go;
Leaving to our children's children this beautiful doorway,
And this elm,
And a blighted earth to till
With a broken hoe.

EUCLID ALONE HAS LOOKED ON BEAUTY BARE

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.

O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
Who, though once only and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

DEPARTURE

It's little I care what path I take,
And where it leads it's little I care;
But out of this house, lest my heart break,
I must go, and off somewhere.

It's little I know what's in my heart,
What's in my mind it's little I know,
But there's that in me must up and start,
And it's little I care where my feet go.

I wish I could walk for a day and a night,
And find me at dawn in a desolate place
With never the rut of a road in sight,
Nor the roof of a house, nor the eyes of a face.

I wish I could walk till my blood should spout,
And drop me, never to stir again,
On a shore that is wide, for the tide is out,
And the weedy rocks are bare to the rain.

But dump or dock, where the path I take
Brings up, it's little enough I care;
And it's little I'd mind the fuss they'll make,
Huddled dead in a ditch somewhere.

"Is something the matter, dear," she said,
"That you sit at your work so silently?"
"No, mother, no, 'twas a knot in my thread.
There goes the kettle, I'll make the tea."

I SHALL GO BACK

I shall go back again to the bleak shore
And build a little shanty on the sand
In such a way that the extremest band
Of brittle seaweed will escape my door
But by a yard or two, and nevermore
Shall I return to take you by the hand;
I shall be gone to what I understand
And happier than I ever was before.

The love that stood a moment in your eyes,
The words that lay a moment on your tongue,
Are one with all that in a moment dies,
A little under-said and over-sung;
But I shall find the sullen rocks and skies
Unchanged from what they were when I was young.

ELEGY

Let them bury your big eyes
In the secret earth securely,

Your thin fingers, and your fair,
Soft, indefinite-colored hair,—
All of these in some way, surely,
From the secret earth shall rise.
Not for these I sit and stare,
Broken and bereft completely;
Your young flesh that sat so neatly
On your little bones will sweetly
Blossom in the air.

But your voice,—never the rushing
Of a river underground,
Not the rising of the wind
In the trees before the rain,
Not the woodcock's watery call,
Not the note the white-throat utters,
Not the feet of children pushing
Yellow leaves along the gutters
In the blue and bitter fall,
Shall content my musing mind
For the beauty of that sound
That in no new way at all
Ever will be heard again.

Sweetly through the sappy stalk
Of the vigorous weed,
Holding all it held before,
Cherished by the faithful sun,
On and on eternally
Shall your altered fluid run,
Bud and bloom and go to seed;
But your singing days are done;
But the music of your talk
Never shall the chemistry
Of the secret earth restore.
All your lovely words are spoken.
Once the ivory box is broken,
Beats the golden bird no more.

WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE KISSED

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
Under my head till morning; but the rain
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
Upon the glass and listen for reply;
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
For unremembered lads that not again
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
I cannot say what loves have come and gone;
I only know that summer sang in me
A little while, that in me sings no more.

PITY ME NOT

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field and thicket as the year goes by;
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.

This have I known always: love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails;
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales.
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

SONNET TO GATH

Country of hunchbacks!—where the strong, straight spine
Jeered at by crooked children, makes his way
Through by-streets at the kindest hour of day,
Till he deplore his stature, and incline

To measure manhood with a gibbous line;
Till out of loneliness, being flawed with clay,
He stoop into his neighbor's house and say,
"Your roof is low for me—the fault is mine."

Dust in an urn long since, dispersed and dead
Is great Apollo; and the happier he;
Since who amongst you all would lift a head
At a god's radiance on the mean door-tree,
Saving to run and hide your dates and bread,
And cluck your children in about your knee?

THE CAMEO

Forever over now, forever, forever gone
That day. Clear and diminished like a scene
Carven in cameo, the lighthouse, and the cove between
The sandy cliffs, and the boat drawn up on the beach;
And the long skirt of a lady innocent and young,
Her hand resting on her bosom, her head hung;
And the figure of a man in earnest speech.

Clear and diminished like a scene cut in cameo
The lighthouse, and the boat on the beach, and the two shapes
Of the woman and the man; lost like the lost day
Are the words that passed, and the pain,—discarded, cut away
From the stone, as from the memory the heat of the tears escapes.

O troubled forms, O early love unfortunate and hard,
Time has estranged you into a jewel cold and pure;
From the action of the waves and from the action of sorrow forever secure,
White against a ruddy cliff you stand, chalcedony on sard.

ON HEARING A SYMPHONY OF BEETHOVEN

Sweet sounds, oh, beautiful music, do not cease!
Reject me not into the world again.
With you alone is excellence and peace,
Mankind made plausible, his purpose plain.

Enchanted in your air benign and shrewd,
With limbs a-sprawl and empty faces pale,
The spiteful and the stingy and the rude
Sleep like the scullions in the fairy-tale.
This moment is the best the world can give:
The tranquil blossom on the tortured stem.
Reject me not, sweet sounds! oh, let me live,
Till Doom espy my towers and scatter them,
A city spell-bound under the aging sun.
Music my rampart, and my only one.

EDWIN CURRAN

Edwin Curran was born at Zanesville, Ohio, May 10, 1892, and was educated at St. Thomas' School in the city of his birth. After working as an unskilled laborer in various trades, he learned telegraphy in 1914 and was employed as an operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. He moved to California in 1926.

In 1917 he printed a little paper-bound pamphlet of thirty pages (*First Poems*) with this naïve note: "Price of this book is 35 cents postpaid. Author is 25, unmarried, a beginner and needs publisher. If this volume meets expenses, another, possibly better, will be issued." Expecting to find poetry of an absurd simplicity, one is startled to find striking images, strange pictures and (in such poems as "Soldier's Epitaph" and "Sailing of Columbus") lines like:

> We climbed the slippery alleys of the sea

and many a lyric flash like:

> The stars, like bells, flash down the silver sky . . .
> Ringing like chimes on frozen trees, or cry
> Along the marble ground.

Second Poems (1920), *The Last Judgment* (1924) and *The Poems of G. E. Curran* (1928) have a similar beauty mixed with banality. These booklets are a jumble of passion, platitude, bad grammar and exaltation. Curran has no critical perceptions; he has little control over his music. For better or for worse, his mood controls him.

AUTUMN

The music of the autumn wind sings low,
Down by the ruins of the painted hills,
Where death lies flaming with a marvelous glow,
Upon the ash of rose and daffodils.
But I can find no melancholy here
To see the naked rocks and thinning trees;
Earth strips to grapple with the winter year—
I see her gnarled hills plan for victories!

I love the earth who goes to battle now,
To struggle with the wintry whipping storm
And bring the glorious spring out from the night.
I see earth's muscles bared, her battle brow,
And am not sad, but feel her marvelous charm
As splendidly she plunges in the fight.

THE PAINTED HILLS OF ARIZONA

The rainbows all lie crumpled on these hills,
The red dawns scattered on their colored sills.
These hills have caught the lightning in its flight,
Caught colors from the skies of day and night
And shine with shattered stars and suns; they hold
Dyed yellow, red and purple, blue and gold.
Red roses seem within their marble blown,
A painted garden chiseled in the stone;
The rose and violet trickling through their veins,
Where they drop brilliant curtains to the plains—
A ramp of rock and granite, jeweled and brightening
Like some great colored wall of sudden lightning!

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Maxwell Bodenheim was born at Natchez, Mississippi, Mav 26, 1892. His education, with the exception of grammar school training, was achieved under the guidance of the U. S. Army, in which Bodenheim served a full enlistment of three years, beginning in 1910. For a while he studied law and art in Chicago, but his mind, fascinated by the new poetry, turned to literature. He wrote

steadily for four years without having a single poem accepted. In 1918 his first volume appeared and even those who were puzzled or repelled by Bodenheim's complex idiom were forced to recognize its individuality.

Minna and Myself (1918) reveals, first of all, this poet's sensitivity to words. Words, under his hands, have unexpected growths; placid nouns and sober adjectives bear fantastic fruit. Sometimes he packs his metaphors so close that they become inextricably confused. Sometimes he spins his fantasies so thin that the cord of coherence snaps and the poem frays into unpatterned ravelings. Still, at his best, Bodenheim is clear-headed and colorful.

In *Advice* (1920) Bodenheim's manner—and his mannerisms—are intensified. There is scarcely a phrase that is not tricked out with more ornaments and associations than it can bear; whole poems sink beneath the weight of profuse decorations. But this volume gives evidence of the ironic imagination which dominates his subsequent work.

Introducing Irony (1922) and *Against This Age* (1923) allow the sardonic impulse to dictate its harshest accents. The communication is more involved than ever: the expression of an acrobatic mind that juggles a dozen mixed metaphors, balancing itself meanwhile upon the knives of emotion with a mordant grimace. *The Sardonic Arm* (1923) shows an author acrid, grotesque, verbally dandified—but seldom unintelligible. Even when Bodenheim writes in the spirit of resentment self-confessed in *Against This Age,* he has something to say which the reader, provoked though he may be by the author's supercilious disdain, might listen to with profit. It is, nevertheless, still true that Bodenheim too often writes in the rôle of literary ring-master, cracking his savage whip over cowering adjectives and recalcitrant adverbs, compelling them to leap in unwilling pairs over the fantastically piled barriers of his imagination.

In *The King of Spain and Other Poems* (1928) Bodenheim continues to exercise his invectives. Yet, in spite of the egotism of the notes which precede and follow many of the poems, the work is sharp, unhackneyed, and brittle. It is obvious that no such language has ever been spoken as the conversation detailed in his volumes; not his characters but the author himself does all the talking; and it is he, a breathlessly sardonic euphuist, who leaps desperately from one image to another. But the images themselves are glittering, and in the realm of the whimsical-grotesque, Bodenheim's footing is sure; his is a nimble if disturbing transilience.

An effort to please popular taste, *Bringing Jazz* (1930), lived up neither to its title nor to its author's reputation for the unusual.

Bodenheim is also the author of several novels, *Crazy Man*

(1924), *Replenishing Jessica* (1925) and *Sixty Seconds* (1929) being the most successful as well as the most self-revealing.

POET TO HIS LOVE

An old silver church in a forest
Is my love for you.
The trees around it
Are words that I have stolen from your heart.
An old silver bell, the last smile you gave,
Hangs at the top of my church.
It rings only when you come through the forest
And stand beside it.
And then it has no need for ringing,
For your voice takes its place.

OLD AGE

In me is a little painted square
Bordered by old shops with gaudy awnings.
And before the shops sit smoking, open-bloused old men,
Drinking sunlight.
The old men are my thoughts;
And I come to them each evening, in a creaking cart,
And quietly unload supplies.
We fill slim pipes and chat
And inhale scents from pale flowers in the center of the square. . . .
Strong men, tinkling women, and dripping, squealing children
Stroll past us, or into the shops.
They greet the shopkeepers and touch their hats or foreheads to me. . . .
Some evening I shall not return to my people.

DEATH

I shall walk down the road;
I shall turn and feel upon my feet
The kisses of Death, like scented rain.
For Death is a black slave with little silver birds
Perched in a sleeping wreath upon his head.
He will tell me, his voice like jewels

Dropped into a satin bag,
How he has tip-toed after me down the road,
His heart made a dark whirlpool with longing for me.
Then he will graze me with his hands,
And I shall be one of the sleeping, silver birds
Between the cold waves of his hair, as he tip-toes on.

HILL-SIDE TREE

Like a drowsy, rain-browned saint,
You squat, and sometimes your voice,
In which the wind takes no part,
Is like mists of music wedding each other.
A drunken, odor-laced peddler is the morning wind.
He brings you golden-scarfed cities
Whose voices are swirls of bells burdened with summer;
And maidens whose hearts are galloping princes.
And you raise your branches to the sky,
With a whisper that holds the smile you cannot shape.

FACTORY GIRL

Why are your eyes like dry brown flower-pods,
Still, gripped by the memory of lost petals?
I feel that if I touched them
They would crumble to falling brown dust
And you would stand with blindness revealed.
Yet you would not shrink, for your life
Has been long since memorized,
And eyes would only melt out against its high walls.
Besides, in the making of boxes
Sprinkled with crude forget-me-nots,
One is curiously blessed if one's eyes are dead.

ADVICE TO A BLUE-BIRD

Who can make a delicate adventure
Of walking on the ground?
Who can make grass-blades
Arcades for pertly careless straying?
You alone, who skim against these leaves,

Turning all desire into light whips
Molded by your deep blue wing-tips,
You who shrill your unconcern
Into the sternly antique sky.
You to whom all things
Hold an equal kiss of touch.

Mincing, wanton blue-bird,
Grimace at the hoofs of passing men.
You alone can lose yourself
Within a sky, and rob it of its blue!

ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

Archibald MacLeish was born in Glencoe, northern Illinois, May 7, 1892. The son of a Scotch merchant and a Connecticut clergyman's daughter, he spent his boyhood on the lake shore, was educated in the public schools of his native town, a Connecticut preparatory school, Yale University, and Harvard Law School. He served in the Field Artillery in France during the War, became a lawyer in Boston and gave up the practice of law for literature, living in the Berkshires during the summer and in Paris during the winter.

MacLeish's first volume, *Tower of Ivory* (1917), gave few hints of the original talent that was revealed in *The Happy Marriage* (1924), *The Pot of Earth* (1925) and the curious *Nobodaddy* (1925). There are influences apparent in all of these. *The Happy Marriage* owes not a little to Conrad Aiken and E. A. Robinson; *The Pot of Earth* relies on T. S. Eliot's structure as well as his free use of dissonance and peculiar juxtapositions. But MacLeish has something to say which is quite his own, something about man's uncertain place in the Unknown.

In *Streets in the Moon* (1926) the complete poet emerges. Here his subject-matter, conceived in amplitude, conveys an unusual "sense of infinity." But it is his idiom even more than his theme which makes MacLeish an important representative of modern poetry. He can, by the skillful use of repetition, achieve new effects in harmony, he can prompt a new beat in even so old a form as the sonnet, *vide* "The End of the World." "Ars Poetica" is more than an extension of poetic language; beneath its successful experiments in timing, interior rhyme and suspension, it says a number of pointed and profound things which have nothing to do with timeliness and changing tastes. The tone of these verses may be

as new as this generation; the spirit which moves beneath them is as old as the sung phrase and the unspoken word.

The Hamlet of A. MacLeish (1928) is clearer in pattern and suppler in power than any of his other long poems. Its blemishes are those of confirmed modernity. Speaking of its author, Conrad Aiken says, "He is a kind of slave of tradition, with the difference that the traditions which enslave him are contemporary ones." MacLeish has not completely thrown off the influence of Eliot and various modern French poets, but his conceptions are so much his own that no one could mistake the originality of his design. In *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish*, the poet has plunged deeper into himself. The half-conscious breaks through; remote associations, shifting allusions, disordered griefs, phantasms, fag-ends of memories float up. By overtone and undercurrent, the reader is led to identify himself—as the author has done—with the eternal Hamlet, that conglomeration of lover, poet, procrastinator, ranter, doer, and doubter. Here (as in "Memorial Rain," which says more about the War than any poetry since Sassoon's, and in the cunning music of "You, Andrew Marvell," which is an extraordinary accomplishment in suspension) the tone is noble. But it is neither phrase-making nor accent which distinguishes MacLeish. It is the discipline which he imposes on the chaos of the subconscious; it is his orderly employment of material almost too fluent to fix. His larger work proves that, beginning with the short, lyrical breath, the poet knows how to hold the long line. Even the craftsman's experiments in rhymed consonants, his inconsistent punctuation (or lack of it), and his refusal to make the orthodox typographical gestures cannot conceal the true—and the traditional—poet.

ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds

. . . . . .

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind—

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs
. . . . . .

A poem should be equal to:
Not true

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean
But be.

PROLOGUE

These alternate nights and days, these seasons
Somehow fail to convince me. It seems
I have the sense of infinity!

(In your dreams, O crew of Columbus,
O listeners over the sea
For the surf that breaks upon Nothing—)

Once I was waked by the nightingales
In the garden. I thought, "What time is it? I thought,
Time—Is it Time still?—Now is it Time?

(Tell me your dreams, O sailors:
Tell me, in sleep did you climb
The tall masts, and before you—)

At night the stillness of old trees
Is a leaning over, and the inertness
Of hills is a kind of waiting.

(In sleep, in a dream, did you see
The world's end? Did the water
Break—and no shore— Did you see?)

Strange faces come through the streets to me
Like messengers: and I have been warned
By the moving slowly of hands at a window.

O, I have the sense of infinity—
But the world, sailors, is round.
They say there is no end to it.

IN MY THIRTIETH YEAR

And I have come upon this place
  By lost ways, by a nod, by words,
By faces, by the old man's face
  At Morlaix lifted to the birds,

By hands upon the table cloth
  At Aldebori's, by the thin
Child's hands that opened to the moth
  And let the flutter of the moonlight in,

By hands, by voices, by the voice
  Of Mrs. Husman on the stair,
By Margaret's "If we had the choice
  To choose or not—" through her thick hair,

By voices, by the creak and fall
  Of footsteps on the upper floor,
By silence waiting in the hall
  Between the door-bell and the door,

By words, by voices, a lost way—
  And here above the chimney stack
The unknown constellations sway—
  And by what way shall I go back?

MEMORIAL RAIN

Ambassador Puser the ambassador
Reminds himself in French, felicitous tongue,
What these (young men no longer) lie here for
In rows that once, and somewhere else, were young—

All night in Brussels the wind had tugged at my door:
I had heard the wind at my door and the trees strung
Taut, and to me who had never been before
In that country it was a strange wind blowing
Steadily, stiffening the walls, the floor,
The roof of my room. I had not slept for knowing
He too, dead, was a stranger in that land
And felt beneath the earth in the wind's flowing
A tightening of roots and would not understand,
Remembering lake winds in Illinois,
That strange wind. I had felt his bones in the sand
Listening.

—Reflects that these enjoy
Their country's gratitude, that deep repose,
That peace no pain can break, no hurt destroy,
That rest, that sleep—

At Ghent the wind rose.
There was a smell of rain and a heavy drag
Of wind in the hedges but not as the wind blows
Over fresh water when the waves lag
Foaming and the willows huddle and it will rain:
I felt him waiting.

—Indicates the flag
Which (may he say) enisles in Flanders' plain
This little field these happy, happy dead
Have made America—

In the ripe grain
The wind coiled glistening, darted, fled,
Dragging its heavy body: at Waereghem
The wind coiled in the grass above his head:
Waiting—listening—

—Dedicates to them
This earth their bones have hallowed, this last gift
A grateful country—

Under the dry grass stem
The words are blurred, are thickened, the words sift
Confused by the rasp of the wind, by the thin grating
Of ants under the grass, the minute shift
And tumble of dusty sand separating
From dusty sand. The roots of the grass strain,
Tighten, the earth is rigid, waits—he is waiting—

And suddenly, and all at once, the rain!

The people scatter, they run into houses, the wind
Is trampled under the rain, shakes free, is again
Trampled. The rain gathers, running in thinned
Spurts of water that ravel in the dry sand
Seeping into the sand under the grass roots, seeping
Between cracked boards to the bones of a clenched
hand:
The earth relaxes, loosens; he is sleeping,
He rests, he is quiet, he sleeps in a strange land.

WEATHER

The northeast wind was the wind off the lake
Blowing the oak leaves pale side out like
Aspen blowing the sound of the surf far
Inland over the fences blowing for
Miles over smell of earth the alien
Lake smell
The southwest wind was thunder on
Afternoon: you saw the wind first in the vine
Over the side porch and the weather vane
Whirled and the doors slammed all together.
After the rain in the grass we used to gather
Wind-fallen cold white apples
The west
Wind was the August wind, the wind over waste
Valleys over the waterless plains where still

Were skulls of buffalo where in the sand stale
Dung lay of wild cattle. The west wind blew
Day after day as the winds on the plains blow
Burning the grass turning the leaves brown filling
Noon with the bronze of cicadas far out falling
Dark on the colorless water, the lake where not
Waves were nor movement
The north wind was at night
When no leaves and the husk on the oak stirs
Only nor birds then. The north wind was stars
Over the whole sky and snow in the ways
And snow on the gray sand where the beach was
North here is the sea and westward the sea
And south the Tyrrhenian sea where the hills saw
Once the long oars and the helmsman. But here to me
The winds blow as always they blew in my
Country,
the winds blow out of Illinois,
Out of Missouri, out of Michigan. I know
The northeast wind: I know how the trees look—
The northeast wind is the wind over the lake
Blowing the oak leaves pale side out. . . .

IMMORTAL AUTUMN

I speak this poem now with grave and level voice
In praise of autumn of the far horn winding fall
I praise the flower barren fields the clouds the tall
Unanswering branches where the wind makes sullen noise

I praise the fall it is the human season now
No more the foreign sun does meddle at our earth
Enforce the green and thaw the frozen soil to birth
Nor winter yet weigh all with silence the pine bough

But now in autumn with the black and outcast crows
Share we the spacious world the whispering year is gone
There is more room to live now the once secret dawn
Comes late by daylight and the dark unguarded goes

Between the mutinous brave burning of the leaves
And winter's covering of our hearts with his deep snow
We are alone there are no evening birds we know
The naked moon the tame stars circle at our eaves

It is the human season on this sterile air
No words outcarry breath the sound goes on and on
I hear a dead man's cry from autumn long since gone
I cry to you beyond this bitter air.

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL

And here face down beneath the sun,
And here upon earth's noonward height,
To feel the always coming on,
The always rising of the night.

To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow,

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening, strange,
The flooding dark about their knees,
The mountains over Persia change,

And now at Kermanshah the gate,
Dark, empty, and the withered grass,
And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass.

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone,
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on,

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone,
And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown,

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls,
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls,

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa, the gilded sand,
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land,

Nor now the long light on the sea—

And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift, how secretly,
The shadow of the night comes on. . . .

THE END OF THE WORLD

Quite unexpectedly as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Mme. Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark, the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness, the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

WINIFRED WELLES

Winifred Welles was born at Norwich Town, Connecticut, January 26, 1893, and educated in the vicinity of her home. After her marriage she moved to New York.

Her delicately fashioned lyrics are the feature of *The Hesitant Heart* (1920). This first volume, so appropriately named, has an

unabashed tenderness which never grows maudlin and a wistful questioning that never forgets to sing.

For a while Miss Welles was one of the editors of *The Measure* in which some of her best verse appeared. *This Delicate Love* (1929) shows that her standards have reached to a more complete craftsmanship, the lines have grown surer and keener edged. "Actual Willow" and "Harvest Dust" are typical of her later work, slender in substance but firm in line.

FROM A CHINESE VASE

Roaming the lonely garden, he and I
Pursue each other to the fountain's brim,
And there grow quiet—woman and butterfly—
The frail clouds beckon me, the flowers tempt him.

My thoughts are rose-like, beautiful and bright,
Folded precise as petals are, and wings
Uplift my dreaming suddenly in flight,
And fill my soul with jagged colorings.

The waters tangle like a woman's hair
Above the dim reflection of a face—
He thinks those are his own lips laughing there,
His own breasts curving under silk and lace.

How shall we know our real selves, he and I,
Which is the woman, which the butterfly?

LOVE SONG FROM NEW ENGLAND

In every solemn tree the wind
  Has rung a little lonesome bell,
As sweet and clear, as cool and kind
  As my voice bidding you farewell.

This is an hour that gods have loved
  To snatch with bare, bright hands and hold.
Mine, with a gesture, gray and gloved,
  Dismiss it from me in the cold.

Closely as some dark-shuttered house
I keep my light. How should you know,
That, as you turn beneath brown boughs,
My heart is breaking in the snow?

ACTUAL WILLOW

Once when I looked at willows, I would say,
"Thin-fingered women are underneath that hair!"
Or, at the close of a quieter day,
A flock of tall birds would seem standing there
On single legs, heads tucked in for the night
Under gray-green plumage—
"Willow, willow is the note
If roots turn claws, and boughs go up in flight!"
Or, "A river-woman with a long white throat
Will come if I call 'Willow!'"
So I would say
When I looked at willows once— But today,
The actual willow, the fact of a tree
Seems fanciful and beautiful enough for me.

HARVEST DUST

The road is burnt to dust, like more dust meadow rue
Smokes in the meadow. Berries are balanced to fall
At a cowbell's echo. Apples will soon be over, nothing is left to do
For the trees but to crook their elbows on the wall.

In the farmhouse doorway a woman husking corn
Droops to where, softer than children's hair, a yellow heap
Of the silk fondles her hand. Under her eyes her face is as worn
As the stone steps where she sits and has fallen asleep.

What is it all for? Why must the earth crack
Over and over beneath this searing breath?
Only that apples be amber and berries black,
And women content and wearied unto death.

Herbert S. Gorman was born at Springfield, Massachusetts, January 1, 1893. After attending the Technical High School he became an actor for two seasons, deserting the stage for the newspaper. He became assistant literary and dramatic editor of the Springfield *Union*, reporter on the New York *Sun* and reviewer for the New York *Post*, *The Freeman* and other journals.

His first book, *The Fool of Love* (1920), shows, beyond an indebtedness to E. A. Robinson, a keen talent and fresh personality. The best of these verses were reprinted with many new ones in *The Barcarole of James Smith and Other Poems* (1922). Gorman had read his Eliot to good purpose, but his own bent kept him from too servile imitation. Meanwhile, he had attracted attention as a critic through his reviews in The New York *Times* and elsewhere, his first extended critical work appearing in 1924: *James Joyce: His First Forty Years*. Having steeped himself in the idiom of *Ulysses*, it is not unnatural that Gorman's novel should reflect the kaleidoscopic manner of Joyce. But *Gold by Gold* (1925) unfolds its own legend, a problem which is obviously the poet's.

Gorman has also written several biographies, *The Incredible Marquis* (1929), which is the life of that incurable romanticist, Alexandre Dumas, being the sprightliest.

THE FANATIC

Well, here it is: you call for me: I come,
But with an eagerness not quite my own;
Propelled by that decisive martyrdom
That pleased the saints upon their faggot throne.

You see them smiling in the cruel flame
That exquisitely licks their willing limbs,
And finding some sad pleasure in the game
Not quite embodied in their lusty hymns.

And so I come: and though I go, be sure
That I will come again tomorrow, too;
And, Love's fanatic, hasten to endure
The littleness that is so great in you.

I am the weakling of that helpless strength
That throws this broken body you despise
Before your carelessness, to find at length
The faith that sleeps behind your faithless eyes.

John Van Alstyn Weaver was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1893. While still a child he went to live in Chicago where he was educated (he also attended Hamilton College and Harvard), and became a member of the staff of the Chicago *Daily News*. He left that paper in 1917 to enter the army, serving as a second lieutenant during the war. In 1920 he was appointed literary editor of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, resigning from that position in 1924. Since 1927 he has spent much time in the cinema-studios of Hollywood.

Besides his verse Weaver has published one prose volume, *Margey Wins the Game* (1922), a work which his friends are happy to forget. His most characteristic efforts are in *In American* (1921), and *Finders* (1923). In these two volumes current slang is used with clever effectiveness and occasional poetic value. Subway-guards, shopgirls, "sporty" freshmen, and the whole race of "hard-boiled" gum-chewers find their celebrant in Weaver's alert lines. Weaver was by no means the first to experiment in the use of the vernacular as a medium for rhyme. From a technical standpoint, his feat of writing sonnets in the American vulgate (*vide* "Ghost") is neither so much of a novelty nor a *tour de force* as *The Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum*, written by Wallace Irwin in 1901. But Weaver has introduced new ideas as well as new vivacities of speech; the background of a jazz civilization is implicit in his rhymed stories which, seldom humorous, are almost solemn and not infrequently sentimental.

In *Finders* and *More in American* (1926) Weaver achieves a more detached attitude; the slang is not so insistent, the emotion less soft. Whatever his limitations, there can be no doubt about the documentary value of his experiments.

GHOST

I'm comin' back and haunt you, don't you fret.
What if I get as far as Hell away?
They's things of me that just can't help but stay—
Whether I want or not, you can't forget.

Just when you think you got me wiped out clear,
Some bird that's singin'—moonlight on a hill—
Some lovely thing'll hurt like it would kill,
And you'll hear somethin' whisperin', "He's here!"

And when somebody holds you closte, like this,
And you start in to feel your pulses race,
The face that's pressin' yours'll be my face;
My lips'll be the ones your lips'll kiss.

Don't cry . . . Which do you think it'll hurt most?—
Oh, God! You think I want to be a ghost? . . .

TWO WAYS

Oncet in the Museum
We seen a little rose
In a jar of alcohol—
You turns up your nose:
"That's the way people think
Love ought to be—
Last forever! Pickled roses!
None o' that for me!"

That night was fireworks
Out to Riverview—
Gold and red and purple
Bustin' over you.
"Beautiful!" you says then,
"That's how love should be!
Burn wild and die quick—
That's the love for me!"

Now you're gone for good . . . Say,
Wasn't they no other way?

ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

Elizabeth J. Coatsworth was born in 1893 in Buffalo, New York. After extended travels she returned to America, where she divides her time between California and an old house overlooking the harbor of Hingham, Massachusetts. She married Henry Beston, author of *Outermost House* and other books, in 1929.

Miss Coatsworth made her début with *Fox Footprints* (1921), a group of images and studies in the Oriental mood. Coming at a time when the country was surfeited with adaptations from the

Chinese and paraphrases from the Japanese, Miss Coatsworth's volume was treated merely as another set of echoes. But, beneath the exotic influences, there was a vein of fresh imagery, a native fancy which was no more Eastern than Miss Coatsworth's own spirit.

Atlas and Beyond (1924) was a far more original piece of work. Although it, too, finds its subjects over-seas, there is nothing of the usual travel-book flavor in any poem, the section entitled "Italy" being particularly delightful because of its mixture of grace and irony.

Compass Rose (1929) has, as the title suggests, something of that mixture of accuracy and fancy, of explicit direction and charming vagueness characteristic of the old animated maps. As a rhyming explorer, Miss Coatsworth must be numbered among the more observant mariners. She is one for whom the fact is but the beginning of the story; to observation she adds imagination, and so brings home an unusually colorful report. Not that her level is always serene; she falters just when she is about to attain the heights. Miss Coatsworth frequently announces a theme of prime significance, but fails to develop it. When the poet is least ambitious she is most successful. Her imaginative ballads are pointed and persuasive; her practiced hand strikes the notes squarely, running bright scales with ease and something like brilliance. She sounds the ironically braggart in "Announcement," the mysteriously macabre in "A Lady Comes to an Inn," the muffled heroic in "Daniel Webster's Horses." But it is in the animal poems that she is happiest and seems most herself. In "The Old Mare," "The Circus-Postered Barn," "The Bad Kittens," "On a Night of Snow" she mingles humor, pity and a faint satire. These are poems to which the reader is likely to turn for more than their gravely uttered whimsicality.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Let it be understood that I am Don Juan Gomez!
My blood is pure blood from the proudest blood of Spain,
And I own hills and valleys beyond a long day's riding,
And heavy lies the silver upon my bridle rein.

Let it be understood that I am Don Juan Gomez!
My saddle cloth is fringed with scalps of Indians I have slain,
And when I see a girl and knock upon her shutter,
Though it be dawn or dark, I need not knock again.

Let it be understood that I am Don Juan Gomez!
Only in prayer to bend the knee and bow the head I deign;
And when I pray the saints go hurrying to the Virgin,
And cry, "Don Juan is praying, and must not pray in vain!"

THE OLD MARE

Gray despair
Was on the old mare,
Grass turned bitter,
Sky a-glare,
And gnats like thoughts,
And thoughts like gnats,
Everywhere.

Her underlip
Hung pendulous wide,
Her ears twitched back,
Her dusty hide
Heaved with her heavy breathing
And her eyes rolled ominously
To one side.

The mule colt lay
In trampled grass,
Slick-tailed, long-eared,
Bespeaking the ass
Carried so long in her body,
Born in travail and sweat—
Alien, alas.

But staggering
To unsteady feet
The mule colt fumbles
An unknown teat;
And the old mare relaxes and sighs,
Finding any motherhood
Most sweet.

DANIEL WEBSTER'S HORSES

If when the wind blows
Rattling the trees,
Clicking like skeletons'
Elbows and knees,

You hear along the road
Three horses pass—
Do not go near the dark
Cold window-glass.

If when the first snow lies
Whiter than bones
You see the mark of hoofs
Cut to the stones,

Hoofs of three horses
Going abreast—
Turn about, turn about,
A closed door is best!

Upright in the earth
Under the sod
They buried three horses
Bridled and shod,

Daniel Webster's horses—
He said as he grew old,
"Flesh, I loved riding,
Shall I not love it, cold?

"Shall I not love to ride
Bone astride bone,
When the cold wind blows
And snow covers stone?

"Bury them on their feet
With bridle and bit.
They were fine horses—
See their shoes fit."

THE CIRCUS-POSTERED BARN

When Dobbin and Robin, unharnessed from the plow,
Stamp smoking to their stalls,
They pass beneath white horses with long manes
Shining upon the walls,
White horses airily leaping through great hoops
Along applauding tracks
Or carrying princesses in rosy tights
Upon their backs.

And Daisy, Madge and Buttercup
Raise their soft eyes,
Where through the darkness of the web-hung stable
Hippopotami arise,
Shaking the water from their enormous shoulders
Floundering in savage mud,
Showing those muzzles huge enough to ponder
An epic cud.

And Tom beside a rat-hole in the boarding
Meets the still stare
Of eyes fiercer than his eyes and a large lithe body
Above him there—
Despondent grow the inmates of the barnyard;
Not one achieves
The super-powers of those super-mammals
Beneath the eaves!

ST. EVAL

After the plow
The sea gulls follow,
Up the hill
And down the hollow,

A cloud of wings,
A storm of cries
That rise and fall
That fall and rise.

Where the slow brown furrow
Rolls from the share
The sea gulls hover,
Their pale eyes stare.

At the fluid earth
They stare and scream,
White breasts above
The slow brown stream,

And the plowman thinks
Of his youth again,
And a high dark wave
With a horse's mane.

PRETTY FUTILITY

Pretty Futility
Always declares
There's nothing so good
As a basket of pears,

Nothing so tranquil,
Nothing so sweet,
As eating ripe pears
In the quiet of heat.

She straightens her ruffles,
She smiles as she swings,
And when she has eaten
Futility sings.

ON A NIGHT OF SNOW

Cat, if you go outdoors you must walk in the snow.
You will come back with little white shoes on your feet,
Little white slippers of snow that have heels of sleet.
Stay by the fire, my Cat. Lie still, do not go.
See how the flames are leaping and hissing low,
I will bring you a saucer of milk like a marguerite,
So white and so smooth, so spherical and so sweet—
Stay with me, Cat. Out-doors the wild winds blow.

Out-doors the wild winds blow, Mistress, and dark is the night.
Strange voices cry in the trees, intoning strange lore,
And more than cats move, lit by our eyes' green light,
On silent feet where the meadow grasses hang hoar—
Mistress, there are portents abroad of magic and might,
And things that are yet to be done. Open the door!

A LADY COMES TO AN INN

Three strange men came to the inn,
One was a black man pocked and thin,
One was brown with a silver knife,
And one brought with him a beautiful wife.

That lovely woman had hair as pale
As French champagne or finest ale,
That lovely woman was long and slim
As a young white birch or a maple limb.

Her face was like cream, her mouth was a rose,
What language she spoke nobody knows,
But sometimes she'd scream like a cockatoo
And swear wonderful oaths that nobody knew.

Her great silk skirts like a silver bell
Down to her little bronze slippers fell,
And her low-cut gown showed a dove on its nest
In blue tattooing across her breast.

Nobody learned the lady's name
Nor the marvelous land from which they came,
But no one in all the countryside
Has forgotten those men and that beautiful bride.

DONALD DAVIDSON

Donald Davidson was born August 18, 1893, in Campbellsville, Tennessee, and was educated in his native state, receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees at Vanderbilt University. The son of a schoolteacher, he himself taught for many years, first in high schools

and later at Vanderbilt University as Assistant Professor of English. He is one of the group which founded *The Fugitive*, that provocative little monthly which put Nashville on the literary map; in his turn he acted as editor of that magazine, and, later, as literary editor of the *Nashville Tennesseean.*

His first volume, *An Outland Piper*, was published in 1924. The diversity of its contents discloses, beneath a certain amount of echoing, a surplus of poetic energy. Although it is evident that Davidson is still "emerging," a fresh voice rises from many of the verses even when most derivative. And that voice has its own decided *timbre.*

The Tall Men (1927) is a work on a much larger canvas than anything previously attempted by Davidson. It testifies to an interesting phenomenon: that the Tennessee group was not at all "South-conscious" while it was publishing *The Fugitive*, but became very much so immediately upon the demise of its organ. This sectional consciousness may be seen in Ransom's later essays, in Tate's *Stonewall Jackson*, in Davidson's own prose. This consciousness mounted to a passion, a passion unfortunately without followers. The Tennesseean group was concerned with a crisis gathering through the South: the division between those intent on agrarianizing perished backgrounds and those who favor a "new South," a South obviously dominated by the North. *The Tall Men* is an expansion of this dichotomy in which Davidson (in a framework derived from Eliot on one hand and Masters on the other) contrasts the Tennessee of the hunters and soldiers with the Tennessee of the Buick-drivers. "Fire on Belmont Street," which was the Southern Prize Poem for 1926 and which acts as Epilogue, synthesizes *The Tall Men;* Davidson having built up, as Stephen Vincent Benét wrote, "A people, a State, a passage of time, and one man's mind." In the section entitled "Geography of the Brain," there is a part beginning:

> I have come a long way, I tell you. I am attended
> (The brain is attended here) by motley splendors:
> Dust of battles, creak of wagons, vows
> Rotting like antique lace; the smiles of women
> Broken like glass; the tales of old men blown
> From rheumy beards on the vague wind; silk gowns
> Crumbling in attics; ruffled shirts on bones
> Of gentlemen in forgotten graves; rifles,
> Hunting-shirts, Bibles, looms, and desperate
> Flags uncrowned.

Here is projected the nostalgia which haunts one part of this poet's work. Here also is a proof that he has come a long way.

CROSS SECTION OF A LANDSCAPE

Here is the ice that girdles joyless ocean;
Water girdling a sphere of quiet slime;
Under it rock that has no light or motion
Save from the twirl, the eternal pantomime.

Under the rock is fire that dies by inches
Over the slag and ash of old decay.
Finally, what? The mathematician pinches
Space to a point, in his ponderable way.

But when I was a boy I searched from pole to pole
Of a gaudy globe, a rainbow colored ball,
Peeled the cover, unraveled the shiny whole
And was vexed to find at center nothing at all.

SPOKEN AT A CASTLE GATE

Before you touch the bolt that locks this gate
Be warned. There's no return where you are going.
A sword is tinder at the touch of fate
And crumbles in a way beyond your knowing.

Something I've heard, but something less I tell.
An old man knows, advises; young men smile,
Blow slug-horns, chink a latch, or clank a bell.
I've watched a many a one this weary while.

You can hear the nightingales, I won't deny.
They always sing for eager souls like you,
Perched on their boughs of possibility,
Most vaguely heard and still more vaguely true.

And they are more, perhaps, than mere tradition.
They must exist, though none come back to say
How they are feathered, or what rare nutrition
Keeps them, piping their sad peculiar lay.

Gardens there are, and Queens, no doubt, a-walking,
White blooms adrift on gold and marvelous hair.
Young men in murmurous dreams have heard them talking,
Leaped up, like you, and entered . . . vanished . . . where?

For all I know, the castle's just a dream,
A shadow piled to mask a dangerous ledge,
A fantasy blown from devils' lungs in steam,
Made permanent here, just on a chasm's edge,

Where you will plunge, forever, ever falling,
For infinite days and nights, a dark lump whirled
That hears or thinks it hears an old voice calling
Beyond the stars that cluster near this world;

A voice that follows you past endless night,
Familiar, yet not quite half-known or named,
The last and sorry remnant of delight
That you lived for, pursued, and touched, and claimed,

Even as you touch the bolt that locks this gate,
Smiling, with patience such as fits old men
Who prophesy. Ah, yes, what you create
Perhaps you'll find,—but never come back again.

FIRE ON BELMONT STREET

(*Epilogue to "The Tall Men"*)

He was a worthy citizen of the town.
"Where is the fire?" he babbled as he ran.
"The fire! The fire!" spat between pursy breaths.
He dropped his question, stuck his gross right hand
Against his watch-chain, ran, and stared, and sobbed,
Out Belmont Street? My God, that's where I live!
Stumbling with slow fat feet and tragic breath
While roaring sirens passed upon the wind.
And then I heard (what laughter!) blobs of heels
Pecking the night with hurry. Poor staccato,
Dragging a million feeble stumps across
The easy pavements while the flames went up,
Gobbling the roofs and sky. Beneath was earth.
Steady against all shouting, ground was waiting
Forever subtle, old. But walls dissolved
And houses quaked with Fire until I could
Endure no more, but ran, as clamorous

As all the plump mad mob, shouting like them:
"The fire," I cried. What fire? No gables burn,
Nor is that redness some unusual dawn
Sprawled against moonrise, nor a dragon's breath
Spurted from some old sewer you forgot,
Nor ghosts of the Red Men that your fathers knew,
Come back with devil-medicine to bombard
Your bungalows. Choctaw and Cherokee
Lie where the spitting Decherd rifles planted
Under the Tennessee grass, their tired bones.
The fire! What fire? Why, God has come alive
To damn you all, or else the smoke and soot
Have turned back to live coals again for shame
On this gray city, blinded, soiled, and kicked
By fat blind fools. The city's burning up?
Why, good! Then let her burn!
But I'll say more,
Remembering other odds, a narrow place,
A shock of arms, a cry of gables burning,
And there were gathered in that long grim room
Of warriors sixty who called Hnaef their lord,
Who saw the gray wolf creeping in the wood
And heard the grind of linden shields afar;
Surrounded were, yet held the door and died
While the strange light of swords and helmets made
The place like day.
But who will stand tonight,
Holding this other door against the press
Of brazen muscles? Who can conquer wheels
Gigantically rolled with mass of iron
Against frail human fingers? Who can quench
The white-hot fury of the tameless atoms
Bursting the secret jungle of their cells?
Oh, who can stay or ever chain the dull
Gnaw of the fiery smoke, eternally settling
Into the beating heart? There is no fire?
Only, perhaps, the breath of a Southern wind
That I have known too well in many a summer,
Drying the pulse, stopping the weary pulse,
Blowing the faint blood back in the curdled veins
Till there is no way to think of what might be

Better or worse. Yet maybe it were better
Climbing the tallest hill to cry at night:
"Citizens, awake! Fire is upon you, fire
That will not rest, invisible fire that feeds
On your quick brains, your beds, your homes, your steeples,
Fire in your sons' veins and in your daughters',
Fire like a dream of Hell in all your world.
Rush out into the night, take nothing with you,
Only your naked selves, your naked hearts.
Fly from the wrath of fire to the hills
Where water is and the slow peace of time."

There is a place where beech-trees droop their boughs
Down-slanting, and where the dark cedars grow
With stubborn roots threading the lichened rocks.
There the smooth limestone benches, rubbed
By warm primeval streams, yet hold the crystal
Forms of dead life. There on a summer's evening
The screech-owl quavers and unseen July-flies
Trill their thin songs. And there my father said,
Pointing a low mound out to me, "My son,
Stand on this Indian's grave and plainly ask,
Indian, what did you die for? And he'll say,
Nothing!"
So was it! So it is!
What did you die for? Nothing, indeed nothing!
The seed of the white man grows on Indian graves,
Waxing in steel and stone, nursing the fire
That eats and blackens till he has no life
But in the fire that eats him. White man, remember,
Brother, remember Hnaef and his sixty warriors
Greedy for battle-joy. Remember the rifles
Talking men's talk into Tennessee darkness
And the long-haired hunters watching the Tennessee hills
In the land of big rivers for something.

APPLE AND MOLE

For a heavy long time on the long green bough
Hangs the apple of a summer that is shaken
From its flat hot road to its apple-topped hill
With the scraping of a mole that would awaken.

He is under the turf of the long green meadow,
Snuffling under grass and lusty clover
With a sure blunt snout and capable paws
Up the long green slope past the beeches and the haws,
For the summer must be shaken and over.

It's a heavy long time that an apple must hang.
He is butting out a path; he is shoveling a furrow,
Till the tree will be a-quiver, feeling mole at the root,
It is tall, it is green, but he will burrow,

Till the root will be sapless and the twig will be dry,
And the long green bough will be shaken.
The apple is too old, it has worms at the core,
And the long green summer will be green no more.
The apple will fall and not awaken.

F. R. McCREARY

F. (Frederick) R. McCreary was born in Hartford, Connecticut, September 18, 1893, and was educated at the Hartford public schools and Syracuse University. Between 1915 and 1919 McCreary worked at a dozen different occupations from grave-digging to advertising. He neglects the details, saying, "I must admit that I dislike those writers who have had all the plebeian odd jobs that I have—'the pick and shovel poets,' 'Verses by a Postman,' 'The Minstrel of the Cornfields,' etc.—and using it all for publicity."

McCreary made his first definite impression with "Before Winter," a rhapsodic but unrhetorical poem which appeared in *Voices*. It is one of the high moments in his volume, *The Northeast Corner* (1925), a splendidly illuminating set of images bound by an emotional unity. There is not a figure in the poem which is hackneyed nor a single metaphor that is strained. It is a sure, deep-pitched voice which rises from these imaginative lines.

BEFORE WINTER

Long ago
The thunder went talking itself back to the dark hills,
Long ago
The green rows of peas went marching to a tiger lily sunset
While the crickets were sharpening their sickles

For the last of the late August moon.
Now hydrangea breasts hang full and low
To nourish more tenderly
Whatever of sunshine,
And the smell of bruised apples rises from the long rotted grass.

Those who come from the fields
Come with their arms overflowing,
And there sounds from the ripe barns
The restless paw of heavy hoofs,
As the smoky wind and the dusk
Go stabling the horses of summer.

Did autumn come with white lips
Sucking at a black beach where no one could listen?
Did she come in a moment neither night time nor day
Whirling red laughter about her,
Long ribbons of ivy leaves, crimson?
Did you see her a gray-shawled woman of the twilight
Seated in a crotch of the hills,
Supping from a half-empty cup?
Or was she a mother, goldenrod tucked in her hair,
Singing to a sunflower poking his head through the corn?
O whoever she is
And however she came
I love her.

I looked hours and hours
Into long golden wells of Indian summer.
I saw my face at the bottom
And staring, remembering,
I suddenly left them
To look at the moon.

For autumn is the sound of a door softly closing at dusk,
Of an old man's voice
Counting over and again
The bushels he stores in the cellar,
The hush of a mother telling herself and her fire,
"Sarah, Thomas and Kate,
These are my children."

Then the curves of a scythe handle tempted my hands.
I grasped them,
And eagerly
I reaped for the last time.
April, June, and August,
I took what was left
And tied it in bundles for the winter.

The dark mistress of fall
Stands in her bare feet by the barn door
Holding a sickle in her hands.
I have helped her gather red apples,
Filling her apron,
And to slit the throats of fat swine;
I have helped her find the hoes and the rakes
And stacked them in a corner with the plow.
So she stands smiling,
Watching the swirl of the smoke mist,
The slow fall of leaves and the night.

I have helped her, but now I must turn from her, whispering,
"Mothers, knit and knit,
As you watch from your windows
The way of your children, their arms full of leaves,
Swaddling the rose bushes.
Barns, hunch your backs to the north,
For your lady is going with her sickle
To beat on the cool door of the snow wind.
Pools, swallow all the stars that you can,
For the ice will come
And cover you over."

September, October, and November,
They are fearless,
So now while the smolder of leaves in the ditches
With tongues of flame and fire
Utter words of autumn prayer,
Let you, my neighbor, and I,
Go through the silence of the tented evening corn.
Let us light a fire at the edge of the fields and the woodside,
And let us stand round it, watching the leap of the shadows,

Saying over and over to ourselves,
"This is our mother, our sky mother autumn,
Who brings shadows and death all about us,
Who fills our hearts with the glory of dying
And soothes us with the promise of snow."
We thrust our hands into the memory of the night
And grasping the hands of our earth fathers, earth mothers,
They who were loyal,
We stand till the last flare and flicker yields to the darkness,
And the darkness is peace.

SINCE CHRISTMAS

These evenings since the Child was born
Strange shadows nudge the roadside thorn,
Strange lanterns light old windows up
Where alien mouths have come to sup.

Since Christmas time when God touched man,
When the ice reached deep and the snow began,
The weathercock at twilight feels
A strange wind snatch at his golden heels.

The fences tramp the fields all night
To keep the winter whole and white,
But round each door at dawn's grim stare
Are tracks of doubt that have trespassed there.

Now the young men watch the new flame climb
From candles fat with unburned time,
But the old men listen with twitching cheeks
Each time the uneasy wind-vane speaks.

ROBERT NATHAN

Robert Nathan was born in New York City, January 2, 1894. He was educated at private schools there and in Switzerland, completing his studies at Harvard.

His first book, *Peter Kindred* (1919), was a mildly interesting novel which was succeeded by the far more original *Autumn* in 1921. The delicately tinted prose as well as the interpolated rhymes revealed the fact that Nathan was a poet in disguise, so it was

no shock to his admirers when *Youth Grows Old,* a collection of verses, appeared within a few months after his successful prose. Although there is variety in these fifty pages, it is the mood of restrained melancholy which Nathan best reproduces. But even the lightest of his stanzas is saved from sentimentality by an ironically lifted eyebrow. As a sequence *Youth Grows Old* (1922) suffers from being pitched in too low a key; as individual songs there is no denying the charm of the lyrics, manifestly the work of one who is a composer as well as an author.

The Puppet Master (1923), *Jonah* (1925), *The Bishop's Wife* (1928) continue the strain of gentle resignation spiced with satire.

A Cedar Box (1929) lacks force and its few pages proceed at a gait that is over-leisurely. Nathan, in spite of his comparative youth, is not a "modernist"; there are no experiments or departures here. There is, on the other hand, a little sadness, a little shrugging whimsicality, and not a little wisdom. Gentle is the adjective most often applied to his books, but the connotations are misleading. Nathan is gentle as a surgeon is gentle, as an analyst is gentle when depths are being probed. More original sonnets have been written by poets of his generation; but, unconcerned with originality, Nathan restates traditional themes and, by the serenity of his utterance, accomplishes that delightful miracle which lifts platitude into poetry. "There is a peace that I have made my own," he writes, and that half-tired, half-triumphant peacefulness emanates from all his work.

AT THE SYMPHONY

(*César Franck, D Minor*)

The 'cellos, setting forth apart,
Grumbled and sang, and so the day
From the low beaches of my heart
Turned in tranquillity away.

And over weariness and doubt
Rose up the horns like bellied sails,
Like canvas of the soul flung out
To rising and orchestral gales;

Passed on and left irresolute
The ebony, the silver throat . . .

Low over clarinet and flute
Hung heaven upon a single note.

"WHEN IN THE CROWD I SUDDENLY BEHOLD"

When in the crowd I suddenly behold
  Your small, proud head, so like a queen for grace,
Bearing its weight of spun and twisted gold
  Like an old crown on an imperial face;
When through the chime of gossip and the cries,
  I meet your glance, amused, serene, and bright
With some small secret, and behold your eyes
  Leap into laughter and immediate light,
Then as a bird might hear repeated over
  (His own song done) the same familiar part
From distant boughs and from the absent lover,
  And with that single beauty fill his heart,
I hear all other sounds, all other words,
Dwindle to silence like the sound of birds.

"I RIDE THE GREAT BLACK HORSES OF MY HEART"

I ride the great black horses of my heart
  With reins of steel across their flying hair;
So slow are they to halt, so swift to start,
  The stormy-breasted stallions of despair.
Dark as the night and fretful as the air,
  Fleeter than hounds that go with bellies thinned—
My wrists of all their strength have none to spare
  When those black hunters lean upon the wind.
What if the sudden thunder of their feet
  Wakes like a dream some farmer from his rest?
Dreams had I too, farmer, before these fleet
  Steeds of the night had broken from their nest.
Their weary flanks are green and white with foam.
Sleep, brother, sleep; I bring my horses home.

"BECAUSE MY GRIEF SEEMS QUIET AND APART"

Because my grief seems quiet and apart,
  Think not for such a reason it is less.
True sorrow makes a silence in the heart,
  Joy has its friends, but grief its loneliness.

The wound that tears too readily to confess,
  Can mended be, by fortune or by art,
But there are woes no medicine can dress,
  As there are wounds that from the spirit start.
So do not wonder that I do not weep,
  Or say my anguish is too little shown.
There is a quiet here, there is a sleep,
  There is a peace that I have made my own.
Man by himself goes down into the deep,
  Certain and unbefriended, and alone.

MARK VAN DOREN

Mark Van Doren was born at Hope, Illinois, June 13, 1894, and was educated at the University of Illinois and at Columbia. He taught English at Columbia, and became literary editor of *The Nation*, for which weekly he reviewed most of the poetry after 1920. (His brother, Carl Van Doren, had been his predecessor as literary editor on the same weekly.)

Besides his verses, he has published four volumes of criticism: *Henry David Thoreau, A Critical Study* (1916) and *The Poetry of John Dryden* (1920), being the best of his analytical appraisals. He took upon himself the huge labor of editing *An Anthology of World Poetry* (1928), which assembles the world's best poetry in the best English versions.

Spring Thunder and Other Poems appeared in 1924. A casual glance through its pages reveals the fact that Van Doren has been influenced by Robert Frost. He, too, writes of homely bucolic things: pastorals on water wheels which need mending, a mountain house in December, the coming of alfalfa, river snow, and dry meadows. His emotion, like Frost's, is restrained. But if neither his subjects nor his point of view are particularly individualized, his mellowness is his own, and the spirit which moves beneath the smooth contours of his verse personifies even the simplest of his quatrains.

Now the Sky (1928) reveals Van Doren as a definitely metaphysical poet. He is still concerned with ferns, dark barns, deserted hollows, but he grows more and more preoccupied with "the crumbling away of former bright edges of courage and causeless decay." He sits in a circle of maples, feeling the cosmic pulse, wondering how long men have watched Arcturus, hearing waves "of an old awareness," underground wisdom—and so "to the sun again, and the fever of learning." Van Doren's material is ordinary

enough and his method needs no prolonged analysis. But his touch is fine and his sensibility pronounced in lines that are casual but never commonplace.

FORMER BARN LOT

Once there was a fence here,
  And the grass came and tried—
Leaning from the pasture—
  To get inside.

But colt feet trampled it,
  Turning it brown;
Until the farmer moved
  And the fence fell down;

Then any bird saw,
  Under the wire,
Grass nibbling inward
  Like green fire.

IMMORTAL

The last thin acre of stalks that stood
  Was never the end of the wheat.
Always something fled to the wood,
  As if the field had feet.

In front of the sickle something rose—
  Mouse, or weasel, or hare;
We struck and struck, but our worst blows
  Dangled in the air.

Nothing could touch the little soul
  Of the grain. It ran to cover,
And nobody knew in what warm hole
  It slept till the winter was over,

And early seeds lay cold in the ground.
  Then—but nobody saw—
It burrowed back with never a sound,
  And awoke the thaw.

THE PULSE

One thing is sure
When most are not:
That there is cold,
That there is hot,

That winter stars
Are swollen blue
And that bright summer
Bulges too—

Getting the same
Black sky with child;
And both are big,
And both are wild.

There is no error
In the frost;
With warmth away
No warmth is lost;

Waves are coming
Of a time
That has been written
In slow rhyme:

Hot and cold,
And cold and hot—
All things may fail,
But this one not.

Though hate and love
And mercy cease,
Under the rippling
Vapor-fleece

Of earth goes warmth
Pursuing cold
And neither is young,
And neither is old.

THE DISTANT RUNNERS

Six great horses of Spain, set free after his death by De Soto's men, ran West and restored to America the wild race lost there some thousands of years ago.

—A legend.

Ferdinand De Soto lies
Soft again in river mud.
Birds again, as on the day
Of his descending, rise and go
Straightly West, and do not know
Of feet beneath that faintly thud.

If I were there in other time,
Between the proper sky and stream;
If I were there and saw the six
Abandoned manes, and ran along,
I could sing the fetlock song
That now is chilled within a dream.

Ferdinand De Soto, sleeping
In the river, never heard
Four-and-twenty Spanish hooves
Fling off their iron and cut the green,
Leaving circles new and clean
While overhead the wing-tips whirred.

Neither I nor any walker
By the Mississippi now
Can see the dozen nostrils open
Half in pain for death of men—
But half in gladness, neighing then
As loud as loping would allow.

On they rippled, tail and back,
A prairie day, and swallows knew
A dark, uneven current there.
But not a sound came up the wind,
And toward the night their shadow thinned
Before the black that flooded through.

If I were there to bend and look,
The sky would know them as they sped
And turn to see. But I am here,
And they are far, and time is old.
Within my dream the grass is cold;
The legs are locked; the sky is dead.

THE ESCAPE

Going from us at last,
He gave himself forever
Unto the mudded nest,
Unto the dog and the beaver.

Sick of the way we stood,
He pondered upon flying,
Or envied the triple thud
Of horses' hooves; whose neighing

Came to him sweeter than talk,
Whereof he too was tired.
No silences now he broke,
No emptiness explored.

Going from us, he never
Sent one syllable home.
We called him wild; but the plover
Watched him, and was tame.

RAYMOND HOLDEN

Raymond Holden was born in New York City in 1894 and educated at Princeton. He was, after several years of free-lancing, managing editor of *Travel Magazine* from 1923 to 1925.

His first volume, *Granite and Alabaster* (1922), is full of intellectual strength; even the lyrics have philosophic undertones. But Holden's is no mere versified celebration. His poetry accomplishes a fusion of the scientific fact and its romantic associations, of the thing seen and the thing imagined. It is New England which Holden projects in this volume—a world of questioning skies and ghostly retrospects, of brooding uncertainties and somber specu-

lations. This "wind-walled quietness," this freighting of lyrics with oblique philosophy, recalls the work of Robert Frost, to whom Holden is obviously indebted. There are moments when it is Frost's rather than Holden's voice which is heard in these poems. But, except for half a dozen pages, Holden maintains himself even when he is most under the spell of his teacher. His intonation falters, but not his intensity.

The work which Holden has published subsequent to *Granite and Alabaster* is less reminiscent of Frost. The ideas as well as the technique are tenser and he has shaken himself free of idiomatic mimicry. "Winter Among the Days," "Geese in the Running Water," and "Dead Morning," combine cool projection with warm sensuousness. "Dead Morning" is as strange and powerful a love-poem as has been written in this generation; "Proud, Unhoped-For Light," a still later poem, has the same personal outcry beneath objective reticence.

Besides being a poet, Holden has written prose of no mean value. Turning biographer for the nonce, he published *Abraham Lincoln* (1929) which, though not to be compared with Sandburg's work, is interesting for Holden's picture of the frontier-politician period and the slow growth of the man into the myth.

DEAD MORNING

When sleep, the supposed guardian,
That had its hands upon my eyes,
Dissolved in moistened light and ran
Among the grasses, water-wise,
I saw above my head a sun
And near me, in a breathless oak,
Two bitter crows and on a stone
A third, wing-deep in silver smoke.
I suddenly knew that this was death
And burial in bodiless air,
And that I should not feel your breath
Against my throat, nor have your hair
Pile at my cheek its sea-sweet smell,
Nor have your body's dolphin length
Balance its curve against my strength.
I knew that I had waked in hell.

GEESE IN THE RUNNING WATER

The geese in the running water, among the snowy stones,
Matching their feet with the geese in the mirror brook,
Stand preening, ruffling the feathers that grow on their hollow bones,
And a man stares from the field with the slowness of sleep in his look.

The arm of the rising dawn, flung over the eastern cloud,
The coming of day which none were sure would come back,
Caught in the eddies among the wide feet of the proud,
Spreads its deep change of light on the changing shallow of black.

The grave, web-footed birds look down at their images,
At the five white-breasted geese left in the ebb of the shadow.
Time that was hurrying over is torn by the crowns of the trees
And thrown to the ground at the feet of the man who crosses the meadow.

WINTER AMONG THE DAYS

O flavorless white hour
That like a drift of snow
Has cold tongues to devour
The warmth of mind we know,
How shall man take his rest
Between your surfaces?
Blood goes thin in the breast
And pride is on its knees.
He must lie, taking tally,
On an unfriendly bed,
Of days continually
Leaping with hoof and head,
Falling with many a bleat
Back to their level flock
As if their heart-shaped feet
Could shake the iron rock.

This winter-crackled doze
Watching ram after ewe
Is all the sleep man knows,
The sleep that must renew
The mind which like a hand
Holds the mere body hung
Upon another land
Older than this, yet young.

PROUD, UNHOPED-FOR LIGHT

"Because, because," the sound of the hard road said
Stepping up into my brain as I went downhill.
But it was only a sound that shook in my head
And the tongue of my mouth let the cold bright air be still.

Out of the pasture, rotten with apples, the cows
Swung their smooth necks, moving as if they swam.
The breath of the thin light parted the apple boughs
And ruffled the flanks of the filly and her dam.

There was no answer to be spoken and no need
To cry out through the quietness to ask and protest.
The proud, unhoped-for light, without fear or heed,
Eager and kind, lay down with the heart in my breast.

JEAN TOOMER

Jean Toomer was born in 1894, in Washington, D. C., received his education in the public schools, taught for a time and made his first impression as a writer in the more experimental magazines.

Cane (1923) is a rhapsodic volume, which, in spite of traces of Sherwood Anderson and the distinct influence of Waldo Frank, reveals a discriminating idiom. Toomer is especially adept in effects of repetition and balance, as is evident in so subtle a lyric as "Song of the Son." Even his prose has this balanced rise and fall; a short story, "Fern"—reprinted in Calverton's *An Anthology of American Negro Literature* (1929)—being not merely an intensified narrative but a prose lyric.

SONG OF THE SON

Pour, O pour that parting soul in song,
O pour it in the sawdust glow of night,
Into the velvet pine-smoke air tonight,
And let the valley carry it along,
And let the valley carry it along.

O land and soil, red soil and sweet-gum tree,
So scant of grass, so profligate of pines,
Now just before an epoch's sun declines,
Thy son, in time, I have returned to thee,
Thy son, I have, in time, returned to thee.

In time, for though the sun is setting on
A song-lit race of slaves, it has not set;
Though late, O soil, it is not too late yet
To catch thy plaintive soul, leaving, soon gone,
Leaving, to catch thy plaintive soul soon gone.

O Negro slaves, dark purple ripened plums,
Squeezed, and bursting in the pine-wood air,
Passing, before they stripped the old tree bare
One plum was saved for me, one seed becomes

An everlasting song, a singing tree,
Caroling softly souls of slavery,
What they were, and what they are to me,
Caroling softly souls of slavery.

H. PHELPS PUTNAM

H. Phelps Putnam was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1894. After the usual public school education, he attended Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale College. Reacting from academic education, he worked in an Arizona copper mine, in Washington as a government historian, in the importing business in New York, and as an editorial assistant in Boston. In 1923, he left the latter position to spend the year in Provence. Returning to America, he endeavored to make a serious profession out of what was a serious avocation, his first book, *Trinc*, appearing in 1927.

Trinc is sharply divided by its two sections. The first ("Green

Wine") is straightforward and lyrical, a set of frankly youthful reactions. The second half ("Brandy") is built about an impressionistic structure in which myth and modernity combine. The symbols used by Phelps are archaic, but the expression is distinctly of the moment. His method is similarly contradictory, being alternately oblique and abruptly four-square. Thus his chief effect is achieved by esthetic shock, a device which Phelps frequently overdoes.

> "I travel brokenly, and I shall know,
> With Hermes and the alchemists—but, hell,
> What use is it talking that way to you?
> Hard-boiled, unbroken egg, what can you care
> For the enfolded passion of the Rose?"

Such incongruities are thrown across his pages until his transitions seem like the mere turn of a trick. But if, as Allen Tate wrote, "his attitude springs, in part, from the current romanticism of the 'hard-boiled,' the main feature of which is the worship of the crude, the barbaric, the 'un-intellectual,'" his Bill Williams, Hasbrouck, Jack Chance are figures in a new cosmogony. These heroes, presenting a latter-day scorn of the intelligence, are usually drunk (*Trinc*, according to Panurge, being "a Panomphean Word, signifying Drink") and always rugged; nevertheless—again by the contradiction of the author's spirit—their disintegrated sensitivities move in an undoubted atmosphere of poetry.

"Ballad of a Strange Thing" is such a poem. Translating Daphne from Thessaly to the township of Pollard Mill and Apollo into a bawdy harvester, Putnam accomplishes something more than surprise. In what is one of the most interesting of contemporary ballads, he makes an old myth immediate and gives backwoods-America a nimbus of antique legend.

BALLAD OF A STRANGE THING[1]

His name was Chance, Jack Chance, he said,
And that his family was dead.
He was a lucid fool, his eyes
Were cool and he beyond surprise.
Into the township Pollard Mill
He came in autumn alone one day,
Loafing along those roads which still,
Though dying in the grass, report
That lumber-sledges went that way.

[1] It may be rewarding to compare this treatment of a myth with Elizabeth Madox Roberts' use of a similar theme in "Orpheus," page 423.

He came idly and in our town
He raised a flight of birds, a brown
And silver flock, and underneath
Their wings were tinged with gold; his breath
Blew and the birds dipped and rose
As if they surely lived which were
But lies of the calm sorcerer.

Autumn came bringing free
Melancholy, but to me
Brought Jack, when I was sitting there
In the open barn door-way where
The sun moved in and I could get,
Drifting by, the sound and smell
Of late bees and of mignonette
From the dying garden by the wall,
And hear the thin defeated bell
Of distant time, and see the tall
Elms beyond the orchard slopes
Rising improbably, like hopes
Swaying above the mind, and I
Was sitting there and he came by.
Under his hat I saw his eyes
Measuring without disguise
The ripeness of my house,
And measuring myself, and he
Turned in, approached and spoke to me.
He had decided undismayed
This was the place for Chance, and I
The boy for him; and so he stayed.

And then the days moved gravely by,
Time drowned in fluent clarity
Flowing between him and me,
Who only lay along the walls
Unashamed of indolence, and heard
The dusty harvesters' harsh calls
To sweating teams, loading the sheaves
On the steep withered fields—their care
Was none of ours; or reasoned there
Where the mill-pond burned with leaves

And rustled at the dam, on those
Stark thoughts that rose
Out of cool spoken words, or we
Loafing in the arbor ate
Slowly the warm grapes, the rusty
Creaking swallows skimmed
The long ridgepoles, the day grew late
Easily, and dimmed.

At night we made a fire to mark
A spot of mirth against the dark,
There in a pasture which lay high
On the nearness of the sky.
Other countrymen would come,
Young farmers, farmers' men, and sons,
One after one they learned to come
And laugh with Chance and tap the old
Keg of cider, acrid gold,
Which we had borne carefully
Out of the cellar where it lay,
Drowsing wickedly it lay
Waiting for us to set free
Its vigor and its treachery.
Then Jack would sing his bawdy songs:
That old ballad which belongs
To timelessness, *The Bastard King*,
Or *Doctor Tanner*, or *Mademoiselle*,
Or *Lil* who died of lechering.
She died with her boots on, as they tell,
With a champion lad between her knees.
Or he would sometimes please,
If drinking brought delusion near,
To tell corrosive tales, the mere
Garments of lies, the cunning kind
Which echo somewhat in the mind,
And then they go, and you are more
Dull and baffled than before.

There went by then, in such a way,
Serene October; the last day
Came and the night was newly cold.
But the fire was high and the old

Cider burned within and we,
A dozen foolish farmers, kept
Alive the late hilarity
Of autumn, and the township slept.
Then Chance arose from where he sat
Against the keg and cocked his hat
Sideways and, walking slow around
The fire, said—"I have always found
Nothing new among much change;
But this I tell you now is strange:

It was at noon, the hour of sleep
For those who use their nights
In the deluding piracy
Of shadowy delights.

And so I slept, above the bank
Above the River Still,
Under an oak, the least of two
That rose under the hill.

But a sound crept through my nerves
And I woke and I could hear
Feet running fast and close,
Down the hill and near,

Then stop; and heard a noise like sobs
And stood up quietly
And peering saw that a breathless girl
Was clutching the other tree.

And then a man came following,
Loping leisurely,
And when he stood beside her said,
'I knew you would wait for me.'

And then she turned at bay; she was
Astonishingly rare,
A young ascetic fury she
Was something almost strange to me
With her honey fallen hair.

'Yes—and have waited even too long,
Before now, to be glad,
Watching your insolence too long—
Oh, you were the gorgeous lad
With your dark lovely face and all
The women you have had.

I have seen the rabbits follow you
Unasked and eagerly;
O ladies, you should see him now,
Begging a kiss of me.'

She ceased, and we all three were still
While he admired her,
And I kept hidden watching them,
For I have that character.

He did not mock her when he spoke,
'Where do they get these dull
Flash melodramas in their skulls?
And such a dainty skull.

Listen, I keep no list of names
For vanity; and I
Dislike the names and odors and ways
Of women; I am shy
Of their domestic wills; and I
Am tired of the melting lie.

But there you are—and sometimes love
Is more than remembered skill.'
'Love,' she said, 'is the rust which ate
The clean rancor of my will.'

He raised his quiet hand to touch
Her hair, but she
Turned sharply down the bank and he
Now followed instantly.

And there below the godly stream
Was whispering in its beard,
And she cried, 'Save me, River Still!'
Then stepped and disappeared.

Well—so far nothing strange;
But after that the queer
Began, and I have seen these things,
And I, the bastard son of change,
Would dare to call them queer.

I saw the girl had gone entirely,
And in her place a dry
Shivering graceful sheaf of reeds
Sprang up, suddenly high;

And that he, following so close
That her hair was in his face,
Clutched and had no girl but had
Sharp reeds in his embrace.

He stepped back, looking at his hands
All laced with blood; a spike
Broke short and stood between his ribs
Most murderous like.

This feller was not eager now,
But only dazed,
And pulled the wet spike from his side,
Fumbling and amazed.

He stooped slowly to bathe his hands,
Then from his pocket drew
A folded knife and cut one reed,
Murmuring, 'This will do.

Sometimes there's music in these girls,
Sometimes,' and sitting then
He made a whistle which he tried
And changed and tried again.

He blew five even notes and stopped,
But the sound rippled away
Slowly, as if a sweet clang came
From the leaves and hummed away.

And then there came along the bank
A black majestic goat
With yellow eyes and gilded horns
And a white beard at its throat.

The goat lay down before his feet
Respectfully, dipping its head,
And the man laughed and, 'Can this be
A messenger?' he said.

And played again and now more wild
And cloudily intricate,
And the goat arose and danced like one
Hieratic and sedate.

And that is all," said Chance, and then
He said, "So long," and walked away
Casually, as if the night were day.
And we jumped up calling, and then
Stood silent for over us coldly fell
Five piercing notes, each like a spark;
We stood there stiffly and immersed,
Hearing laughter in the dark,
Until I spoke, being the first,
"We had better go home now to bed;
We have drunk too much," I said.

Thereafter the rains beat down
The autumn, the drenched leaves came down
From the black trees, choking the ditches,
And over the sea came sons-of-bitches
With a hollow quarrel, the talking rats
Of England and of Europe slithered
Down the hawsers, doffed their hats
And squealed; and the plague spread and came,
Taking the cleanly name
Of honor for its strange device,
Even to our town; the conscript lice
Played soldiers over Pollard Mill
And pitched their camp on the River Still;
But no more Jack, and we were more
Dull and baffled than before.

ABOUT WOMEN

Fair golden thoughts and lovely words—
Away, away from her they call,
For women are the silly birds,
And perching on a sunny wall
They chirp the answer and the all;
They hold for true all futile things—
Life, death, and even love—they fall
To dreaming over jeweled rings.

Their bodies are uncouthly made,
And heavy swollen like a pear,
And yet their conquered, undismayed
And childish lovers call them fair.
Their honor fills them full of care,
Their honor that is nothingness,
The mystery of empty air,
The veil of vain delightfulness.

Their subtleties are thin and pale,
Their hearts betray them in their eyes:
They are a simple flute, and frail,
With triple stops for playing lies.
These poor machines of life are wise
To scorn the metaphysic glow,
The careless game that laughs and dies,
The heady grace they cannot know.

Well, give them kisses, scatter flowers,
And whisper that you cannot stay;
We shall have clarity and hours
Which women shall not take away.

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

Genevieve Taggard was born November 28, 1894, on an apple farm at Waitsburg, Washington. At the age of two she was taken by her parents to Hawaii, where she remained, with one brief in-

terval, for the next eighteen years. She attended the University of California, edited the college literary magazine, and graduated in 1919. Two years later, in New York, with a group of other poets, she helped found *The Measure,* that journal of poetry which was particularly hospitable to the modern lyric.

Her first volume, *For Eager Lovers,* was published in 1922. In spite of the banal title, Miss Taggard's lines are unaffected and her general statements have almost personal definiteness. It is always a sensitive artist—and a woman—speaking through such melodies as "The Enamel Girl," and "With Child," a difficult motif and a treatment which is both firm and delicate. The glitter of "Ice Age" and the hurt beauty of "Unacknowledged Dedications" are almost equally successful.

Hawaiian Hilltop, a leaflet of poems about her childhood in the tropics, was published in 1923. It proved that Miss Taggard was at her best in the more extended lyric; such a poem as "Solar Myth" is more vivid, more richly delineated than the best of her shorter melodies.

Words for the Chisel (1926) was notable for the long narrative "Poppy Juice" which opened the volume. Less comment was accorded the finer lyrics in which Miss Taggard had acquired a style both subtle and colloquial. No poet could be more self-critical than was Miss Taggard, for two years later she made a selection from her three previously published volumes and, after ten years' work, retained exactly twenty-eight poems for *Travelling Standing Still* (1928). The title is far more fortunate than the one immediately preceding it in date of publication, for Miss Taggard's manner is far from stony. There is, it is true, a hardness here, but it is the tensity of emotion, not the toughness of a metallic technique. Such poems as "With Child," and "Dilemma of the Elm" proceed from experiences which are common and yet climacteric. "Doomsday Morning" and "On the Properties of Nature for Healing an Illness" (not published in any of her volumes) are products of an imagination schooled by intellectual sobriety. The scrupulous care with which she has selected her most important volume, shows in these as in the simplest of Miss Taggard's verses.

Circumference, a collection exhibiting "varieties of metaphysical verse" from Donne to E. E. Cummings, was edited by Miss Taggard and published in a distinguished format in 1930.

WITH CHILD

Now I am slow and placid, fond of sun,
Like a sleek beast, or a worn one:

No slim and languid girl—not glad
With the windy trip I once had,
But velvet-footed, musing of my own,
Torpid, mellow, stupid as a stone.

You cleft me with your beauty's pulse, and now
Your pulse has taken body. Care not how
The old grace goes, how heavy I am grown,
Big with this loneliness, how you alone
Ponder our love. Touch my feet and feel
How earth tingles, teeming at my heel!
Earth's urge, not mine—my little death, not hers;
And the pure beauty yearns and stirs.

It does not heed our ecstasies, it turns
With secrets of its own, its own concerns,
Toward a windy world of its own, toward stark
And solitary places. In the dark,
Defiant even now, it tugs and moans
To be untangled from these mother's bones.

THE ENAMEL GIRL

Fearful of beauty, I always went
Timidly indifferent:

Dainty, hesitant, taking in
Just what was tiniest and thin;

Careful not to care
For burning beauty in blue air;

Wanting what my hand could touch—
That not too much;

Looking not to left or right
On a honey-silent night;

Fond of arts and trinkets, if
Imperishable and stiff.

They never played me false, nor fell
Into fine dust. They lasted well.

They lasted till you came, and then
When you went, sufficed again.

But for you, they had been quite
All I needed for my sight.

You faded. I never knew
How to unfold as flowers do,

Or how to nourish anything
To make it grow. I wound a wing

With one caress; with one kiss
Break most fragile ecstasies . . .

Now terror touches me when I
Dream I am touching a butterfly.

SOLAR MYTH

(Maui, the dutiful son and great hero, yields to his mother's entreaty and adjusts the center of the universe to her convenience. The days are too short for drying tapa. He is persuaded to slow down the speed of the spider-sun with a lasso of sisal rope.)

The golden spider of the sky
Leaped from the crater's rim;
And all the winds of morning rose
And spread, and followed him.

The circle of the day swept out,
His vast and splendid path;
The purple sea spumed in the west
His humid evening bath.

Thrice twenty mighty legs he had,
And over earth there passed
Shadows daily whipping by,
Faster, faster, fast . . .

For daily did he wax more swift,
And daily did he run
The span of heaven to the sea,
A lusty, rebel sun.

Then Maui's mother came to him
With weight of household woes:
"I cannot get my tapa dry
Before the daylight goes.

"Mornings I rise and spread with care
My tapa on the grass;
Evenings I gather it again,
A damp and sodden mass."

Then Maui rose and climbed at night
The mountain. Dim and deep
Within the crater's bowl he saw
The sprawling sun asleep.

He looped his ropes, the mighty man,
He whirled his sisal cords;
They whistled like a hurricane
And cut the air like swords.

Up sprang the spider. Maui hurled
His lasso after him.
The spider fled. Great Maui stood
Firm on the mountain-rim.

The spider dipped and swerved and pulled,
But struggle as he might,
Around one-half his whirl of legs
The sisal ropes cut tight.

He broke them off, the mighty man,
He dropped them in the sea,
Where there had once been sixty legs
There now were thirty-three.

Maui counted them, and took
The pathway home; and came
Back to his mother, brooding,—strode
Like a lost man, and lame.

The tarnished spider of the sky
Limped slowly over heaven,
And with his going mourned and moaned
The missing twenty-seven.

On with a hollow voice he mourned,
Poured out his hollow woe;
Over, each day the sound of him
Bellowing, went below.

Maui saw the gulls swarm up
And scream and settle on
The carcass of the limping thing
That once had been the sun.

But still he thought at length to have
His mother satisfied.
"Can't you put back his legs again
Now all my tapa's dried?"

"The days are long and dull," she said,
"I loved to see them skim." . . .
Wearily the old sun shook
The black birds off of him.

DOOMSDAY MORNING

Deaf to God, who calls and walks
Until the earth aches with his tread
Summoning the sulky dead,
We'll wedge and stiffen under rocks
Or be mistaken for a stone,
And signal as children do, "Lie low,"
Wait and wait for God to go.

The risen will think we slumber on
Like slug-a-beds. When they have gone
Trouped up before the Judgment Throne
We in the vacant earth, alone,—
Abandoned by ambitious souls,
And deaf to God, who calls and walks

Like an engine overhead
Driving the disheveled dead,—
We will rise and crack the ground,
Tear the roots and heave the rocks,
And billow the surface where God walks,
And God will listen to the sound
And know that lovers are below
Working havoc, till they creep
Together, from their sundered sleep.

Then end, world! Let your final darkness fall!
And God may call . . . and call . . . and call.

ON THE PROPERTIES OF NATURE FOR HEALING AN ILLNESS

Try tropic for your balm,
Try storm,
And after storm, calm.
Try snow of heaven, heavy, soft, and slow,
Brilliant and warm.
Nothing will help, and nothing do much harm.

Drink iron from rare springs; follow the sun;
Go far
To get the beam of some medicinal star;
Or in your anguish run
The gauntlet of all zones to an ultimate one.
Fever and chill
Punish you still,
Earth has no zone to work against your will.

Burn in the jeweled desert with the toad.
Catch lace
In evening mist across your haunted face;
Or walk in upper air the slanted road.
It will not lift that load;
Nor will large seas undo your subtle ill.

Nothing can cure and nothing kill
What ails your eyes, what cuts your pulse in two,
And not kill you.

DILEMMA OF THE ELM

In summer elms are made for me.
I walk ignoring them and they
Ignore my walking in a way
I like in any elegant tree.

Fountain of the elm is shape
For something I have felt and said. . . .
In winter to hear the lonely scrape
Of rooty branches overhead

Should make me only half believe
An elm had ever a frond of green—
Faced by the absence of a leaf
Forget the fair elms I have seen.

(A wiry fountain, black upon
The little landscape, pale-blue with snow—
Elm of my summer, obscurely gone
To leave me another elm to know.)

Instead, I paint it with my thought,
Not knowing, hardly, that I do;
The elm comes back I had forgot
I see it green, absurdly new,

Grotesquely growing in the snow.
In winter an elm's a double tree;
In winter all elms trouble me.

But in summer elms are made for me.
I can ignore the way they grow.

MARJORIE MEEKER

Marjorie Meeker was born in Bradford, England, while her father was there as American consul. She came to the States when about five years old and was educated in this country. Since her

childhood, she has spent much of her time traveling in Europe and has lived alternately in New York and Ohio.

Although Marjorie Meeker is not a prolific writer, whatever she prints has a quiet distinction. While still a neophyte (the Young Poet's Prize, offered through *Poetry*, was awarded to her in 1924), she exhibited none of the fluttering syllables affected by many of her contemporaries; instead of pretty agitations, she presented a stripped clarity. Whether she writes a memorial sonnet on the tragic death of her brother, a lyric prayer, or a love song, her lines capture a strength which is no less steely for being supple.

Color of Water (1928) has a heightened music. Somewhat influenced by Elinor Wylie and the modern metaphysical poets, Marjorie Meeker unpretentiously builds suspensions of "cool imperious words" and phrases no darker than the color of water.

WHERE MY STEP FALTERS

Where my step falters,
  My fathers trod;
But I raze their altars,
  For my God,

At whose cruel
  Thrust I am learning—
I am fuel
  For his burning.

My brain is humming,
  My heart is dusk
With awe at his coming.
  I am the husk

Cast away
  For his leaping higher;
I am the gray
  Ash of his fire.

No one knows,
  And little it matters
Where the husk blows
  Or the ash scatters.

MEMORIAL SONNET

By many a saint and many a scholar led,
I devised dreams where death was so assailed
That grief became a source where beauty fed.
My dear, my dear . . . the reasoned dream has failed.
Let nobler hearts, or those who loved you less,
Become with sorrow beautiful and wise;
I only know, upon your nothingness
I stare with cold uncomprehending eyes.
Love cannot glorify the loss of love,
Nor loneliness exalt an empty room,
Nor any gracious solace lift above
The cold ironic shadow of a tomb
Whose simple breadth no fire of faith can span
By any pledge of any God or man.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

Babette Deutsch was born September 22, 1895, in New York City. She received her B.A. at Barnard College in 1917, doing subsequent work at the New School for Social Research.

Banners (1919) has a rich emotional content, the expression of a high-strung, apperceptive nature. *Honey Out of the Rock* (1925) is a less unified but scarcely less sensitive volume; few of the pages lack the eager seriousness which characterizes Miss Deutsch's writing.

In collaboration with her husband, Avrahm Yarmolinsky, she has published two anthologies: *Modern Russian Poetry* (1921) and *Contemporary German Poetry* (1923). Her novels, *In Such a Night* (1927) and *A Brittle Heaven* (1926), are more mannered and straining than her verse.

Fire for the Night (1930), though her smallest volume, is by far her best. Intellect dominates, but emotion is by no means absent. Among the outstanding poems are "Interim," the sonnet sequence "Time and Spirit," and "Thoughts at the Year's End," which won *The Nation's* poetry prize for 1926.

THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Are you at ease now,
Do you suck content

From death's dark nipple between your wan lips?
Now that the fever of the day is spent
And anguish slips
From the small limbs,
And they lie lapped in rest,
The young head pillowed soft upon that indurate breast.
No, you are quiet,
And forever,
Tho for us the silence is so loud with tears,
Wherein we hear the dreadful-footed years
Echoing, but your quick laughter never,
Never your stumbling run, your sudden face
Thrust in bright scorn upon our solemn fears.
Now the dark mother holds you close. . . . O, you
We loved so,
How you lie,
So strangely still, unmoved so utterly
Dear yet, but, oh, a little alien too.

IN A MUSEUM

Here stillness sounds like echoes in a tomb.
The light falls cold upon these antique toys
Whereby men sought to turn the scales of doom:
Jade gods, a ritual of rigid boys.
Warm blood was spent for this unwindowed stone
Tinct with the painted pleasures of the dead;
For secrets of unwithering flesh and bone—
With these old Egypt's night was comforted.

We lean upon the glass, our curious eyes
Staring at death, three thousand years remote.
And vanity, the worm that never dies,
Feeds on your silver ring and Pharaoh's coat.
And are these heartbeats, then, less perilous?
Since death is close, and death is death for us.

ALTER BRODY

Alter Brody was born at Kartúshkiya-Beróza, Province of Grodno, Russia, November 1, 1895. He came to New York City

at the age of eight and, after a cursory schooling, wrote translations for Jewish and American newspapers. His first poems appeared in *The Seven Arts* in 1916-17.

In *A Family Album* (1918) one sees the impress of a tense and original mind, of imagination fed by strengthening fact, of sight sharpened by insight. Many of Brody's lines are uncouth and awkward; what music he achieves is fortuitous. Yet his pages are filled with picturesque honesty and uncompromising tenderness. Much of this work is an interpretation of the modern world against a background of old dreams: young America seen through the eyes of old Russia.

Lamentations (1928) is a collection of Jewish-American folk-plays. Taking his material from the tenements, the delicatessen stores, the pushcart-crowded streets, Brody has enriched folk literature with a new localism.

A CITY PARK

Timidly
Against a background of brick tenements
Some trees spread their branches
Skyward.
They are thin and sapless,
They are bent and weary—
Tamed with captivity;
And they huddle behind the fence
Swaying helplessly before the wind,
Forward and backward,
Like a group of panicky deer
Caught in a cage.

GHETTO TWILIGHT

An infinite weariness comes into the faces of the old tenements,
As they stand massed together on the block,
Tall and thoughtfully silent,
In the enveloping twilight.
Pensively,
They eye each other across the street,
Through their dim windows—
With a sad recognizing stare;
Watching the red glow fading in the distance,

At the end of the street
Behind the black church spires;
Watching the vague sky lowering overhead,
Purple with clouds of colored smoke
From the extinguished sunset;
Watching the tired faces coming home from work—
Like dry-breasted hags
Welcoming their children to their withered arms.

E. MERRILL ROOT

E. Merrill Root was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1895. He spent most of his life, however, in New England, attending Amherst College, where he studied under Robert Frost. He was one of the editors of *The Measure* and a teacher and lecturer at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana.

Lost Eden (1927) and *Bow of Burning Gold* (1929) betray, even in their titles, Root's mixture of influences. His verse, forthright and self-declared, sometimes suffers from its own downrightness, emerging from what is evidently a transitional period. But his protests are spontaneous, and from an avowedly romantic vision he reaches toward a poetry that has breadth. His descriptions are particularly rich; his poetry, writes Genevieve Taggard, "is often like the paintings of Rousseau—his animals rise up in the midst of thick blades of plants. He achieves what few moderns even try to achieve: the difficult welding of being and intellect."

SCRUB OAK

I am like a scrub oak tree:
Granite is good earth for me.
I am small—but very tough:
Rock, for me, is food enough.
Elms may lift their pebbled towers
Higher, and the October flowers
Of the maples flush and blaze
Brighter than my sober phase;
But I hold my steadfast bronze
Leaves when they are skeletons.

Also in the summer I,
All that earth can do, defy:

Barren ledge and burning earth
Are foundation of my mirth.
There my silver-shaggy boughs
Feed the wildwood deer, not cows;
And that pert and furry flame—
The red-squirrel—in mad game
Runs across my leafy hills
For his emerald domiciles.
Oven-bird and loud towhee
Have a strong green shield in me,
Bravely held against the sun.
Under my low bosses run
Fragrant gloss and dainty twine
Of wintergreen and partridge-vine.
And (while I turn the sun's shock)
Spring's lusty burnished partridge-cock
Beats his wings until they drum
Love's superb exordium.

Rock below and sun above—
Such is the harsh life I love;
Sun above and rock below—
Still I bud, and leaf, and grow:
Like little Jack in the old tale
I fight my giants—and prevail.

In serenity I fashion
With quiet power and quiet passion
Stalwart, loving-intricate
Cups to hold the glossy freight
Of the future's forests shut
In the brown joke of a nut.

Ice storms come, and ice storms go;
Fire's crimson rivers flow
Flooding with their tidal waves
My green homely architraves:
Quietly I rise again
Over violence or chicane—
Defying from the deeper granite
The skin-diseases of the planet.

Listen to a scrub oak tree
Speaking his philosophy:
"Rock and sun and sand are good
Always to a brave man's mood:
Build on waste and desolation
Your green towers of affirmation;
If no God or man be fed,
Offer deer their emerald bread;
Tho you shield no man or maid,
Give the little rabbits shade!"

PRETTY POLLY

An agile noisy jungle flower he flies
Where monkeys pelt fierce peccaries with nuts;
And alligators lurk for chance supplies
'Neath river villages of tree-top huts.

When the Brazilian sun—a red-hot drum—
Rises, he screams a challenge with gold beak
To tell the jungle that the day is come;
Then preens each crimson feather with a tweak.

Fed with Andean milk, the Amazon
Glitters between the forests where he dines;
He gathers golden fruit or lunches on
The lustrous berries of vanilla vines.

He shouts at pythons looped like harmless boughs,
Or the poor sleepy sloths that scarcely move;
He ruffles plumes and utters lyric vows
To tell some pretty parrot-flirt his love.

And he will guard, a brilliant sentinel,
The hollow nest where in a round warm egg
His son lies prisoner in a quiet cell,
Waiting his scarlet wing, his golden leg.

And when the sun, like some red armadillo,
Burrows into the West and birds must doze,
Cushioned all night upon an airy pillow
The parrot sleeps—except his gripping toes.

. . . . . .

But someday it may be a Caliban
Will capture him and sell him to a cage
In our gray North, and make brass bars the span
Of one who had a jungle heritage.

Bird of bronze lyrics once, who blazed and flew,
He will become a thing of solemn folly
To please old maids or yokels at a zoo:
He'll ask for crackers and say, "Pretty Polly!"

EDMUND WILSON

Edmund Wilson was born May 8, 1895, at Red Bank, New Jersey, which is still the home of his family. He graduated from Princeton University, went into service when America entered the War and remained in France until the end of it. He joined the staff of *Vanity Fair* where one of his colleagues was John Peale Bishop, with whose collaboration he prepared a volume of mordant humor, subacid thrusts and swift nonsense, *The Undertaker's Garland* (1922). After becoming managing editor of *Vanity Fair*, he left that fashionable periodical to join *The New Republic*. Some of his critical contributions to this weekly were collected in *Discordant Encounters* (1926), a volume which, possibly because of its lack of integration, has been insufficiently praised. His novel, *I Thought of Daisy* (1929), was published at almost the same time as his book of poems, *Poets, Farewell* (1929).

Poets, Farewell is, like *Discordant Encounters*, an alert but uncoördinated offering. Its indecisions make the reader conscious that Wilson stands at the cross-roads, half convinced that the practice of poetry is not for him and yet unwilling to relinquish it. The very contents disclose the quandary: the self-declared poet of "Copper and White," "Infection" and the title-poem is shouldered out by the prose-fancier of "Jersey Coast," and "Oneida County Fair" who, in turn, is interrupted by the ironic critic of "American Masterpieces." The author has not quite come to terms with himself. But the poet dictates the mood even though he cannot as yet dominate the medium.

POETS, FAREWELL

Poets, farewell!—farewell, gay pastorals!
Clear amber cider-brandy; green-eyed cats;

Dim "blues"; blue willow-pattern dinner plates;
Waking to birds and light from four white walls;
Green deeps of ponds the sun-burned bather cleaves—
Dark waters, warm by gusts or loded cold;
Blue hills, green valleys like great maps unrolled;
Weeds in the garden; hornets in the eaves.

—We have rhymed under gray skies in the stubble grass—
Sped plunging motor-rides with drunken song—
Had Wyatt with breakfast, Yeats with the final glass.
—Poets, farewell!—O subtle and O strong!—
Voices, farewell!—the silver and the brass—
I leave that speech to you who have the tongue.

INFECTION

Five days in fever thus I lay—
With stinging eyes could only stare
Where naked branches cracked the gray
Or fog suffused the empty air.

Baked like a crock, without, within,
By night I came to understand,
With shifting limbs and shriveled skin,
Brunetto on the burning sand—

Yet him like some poor soldier gassed
Recalled—to shudder at the sign!—
Unslaked by poetry at last,
The pain, but not the poet's line.

I thought bad whiskey, manners, plays,
Bad talk abroad, bad work alone,
Bad damp apartments on bad days,
Have poisoned me from brain to bone—

Those streets where once my freedom found
Love, summer and the muse—I start
To gaze upon that happy ground
With hatred and a sickened heart—

Yet knew—and deep in fever sunk—
Not fogs had stretched me there to sprawl,
Not all seen, said, read, written, drunk,
But the bad heart that poisons all.

ROBERT HILLYER

Robert (Silliman) Hillyer was born in East Orange, New Jersey, June 3, 1895. He attended Kent School, and Harvard College. After graduating from the latter, he was an ambulance driver with the French army from 1917 to 1919, was at Copenhagen as Fellow of the American-Scandinavian foundation in 1921, and since that time has been Assistant Professor of English at Trinity College (from which he received the honorary degree of A.M.) and Assistant Professor of English at Harvard.

Hillyer's first book was as innocuous as its title, *Sonnets and Other Lyrics* (1917), following which came six volumes of varying merit. Hillyer's seventh, entitled with an appropriateness suspiciously like a pun *The Seventh Hill* (1928), is by all means his best. On the surface the verse seems to lack that sense of discovery which distinguishes poetry from versification. But this is only because Hillyer's technique and idiom are traditional. His experiences, if not unique, are significant and his utterance, though full of foreign and unmistakable accents, has unmistakable authority. Possibly because there is nothing local in his subject-matter or treatment, Hillyer's work found more favor in England than in America, *The Halt in the Garden* (1925) having a foreword by Arthur Machen and eliciting high praise from Middleton Murry.

Though the contours of this poetry are delicate to the point of elegance, the spirit upholding them has a sustaining strength. "Prothalamion," which is the peak of the volume, is typical. Upon a theme which has done duty since the beginning of art, in a form which is uncompromisingly classical, Hillyer has constructed twenty-six stanzas not one of which falls below a high seriousness.

"AS ONE WHO BEARS BENEATH HIS NEIGHBOR'S ROOF"

As one who bears beneath his neighbor's roof
Some thrust that staggers his unready wit
And brooding through the night on such reproof
Too late conceives the apt reply to it,

So all our life is but an afterthought,
A puzzle solved long past the time of need,
And tardy wisdom that one failure bought
Finds no occasion to be used in deed.

Fate harries us; we answer not a word,
Or answering too late, we waste our breath;
Not even a belated quip is heard
From those who bore the final taunt of death;
And thus the Jester parries all retort:
His jest eternal, and our lives so short.

PASTORAL

So soft in the hemlock wood
The phoenix sang his lullaby,
Shepherds drowsed where they stood,
Slumber felled each passerby,
And lovers at their first caress
Slept in virgin loneliness.

Not for mortal eye to see
Naked life arise from embers;
Only the dark hemlock tree
Evergreen itself, remembers
How the Word came into being,
No man hearing, no man seeing.

From the taut bow of sleep
Shoots the phoenix toward the day,
Shepherds wake and call their sheep,
Wanderers go on their way.
Unaware how death went by,
Lovers under the hemlocks lie.

PROTHALAMION

(*Second Section*)

The hills turn hugely in their sleep
With sound of grinding rock and soil
While down their granite shoulders leap
The waterbrooks in white turmoil.

The vigil of Good Friday done,
Our second spring ascends the height;
The earth turns southward toward the sun,
And trees which guard the pascal door,
In leaf once more,
Once more are murmurous with strange delight.

For now is the world's Eastertide,
And born that they may die again
Arise from death the gods who died.
Osiris, slender as young grain,
Comes back to Isis; the shy lad
Adonis wakens by the stream;
And Jesus, innocently clad
In samite, walks beneath the trees,
Half ill-at-ease
That Judas and the Cross were but a dream.

And thou art she whom I have seen
Always, but never understood,
In broken shrines festooned with green,
In twilight chapels of the wood;
Or on the hills a shepherdess
Walked with the sun full on her face,
And though her body and her dress
Appareled her in meek disguise,
I dropped my eyes,
For still I knew the goddess by her pace.

I know thee now in morning light
Though thou art wrought of flesh and blood,
And though the mother of the night
Resumes at dawn her maidenhood;
And though love severed with his knife
The girdle of the million years
And yielded to importunate life
The toll she asks of those who still
Would journey, till
They pass her known and visible frontiers.

The children from beyond the sun
Come bounding down the hillside grass,
And in the joyous rout is one
Who smiles and will not let us pass.
He stands, the fairest of them all,
And in his loveliness I trace
Thy loveliness. His light footfall
Bends not the grass he treads upon;
But he is gone
Before my eyes have feasted on his face.

Let him go back beyond the air;
This spring is ours, it is not his;
Those eager lips would take their share
Of love's yet undiminished kiss.
Fairer than he, as young, as gay,
As much a child, forget all things,
All but this transitory day
Of love, all things but love, and give
Thy fugitive
Delights to me who fly but with thy wings.

In undulant desire we merge,
On tides of light we sport and rest;
We swerve up from the deeper surge
To hover on the trembling crest
Of joy, and when the wave has passed,
Then smooth is the swing to the abyss
Of quietness, where with a last
Eye-darkening smile, we say farewell
Until the spell
Shall be renewed. Forget all things but this.

No grass-blade bends, no shadow stirs;
Love mounted high, slumber is deep;
Deep is the spring beneath the firs,
A sweet and lonely place for sleep.
And waking, we shall cool our flesh
In depths so clear they seem as air;
Twofold in beauty, thou refresh
Thy body in that water, bright

With muted light,
And brighter still for thy reflection there.

While I along the bank shall find
The flowers that opened with the day
Still dew-drenched, and with these entwined
New fronds of fern or darker bay.
Or pausing in a shaft of sun
That strikes across the mottled glade
Watch thee too long, beloved one,
Watch thee with eyes grown big with tears
Because the years
Suddenly spoke and made my heart afraid.

Giver of immortality—
That was thy name within the shrine—
The Mighty Mother, Star of the Sea,
All syllables of love were thine
To wear as lesser women wear
The garlands of their fragile spring;
Why then within my heart this fear
Of time? why then amid the shout
Of life, this doubt
That clouds the new sun like an outspread wing?

We must not to a foe like time
Yield up our present. Take my hand
And up the morning we shall climb
Until the wooded valley land
Lies all beneath us in the drowse
If love's meridial aftermath;
The trellis of entwining boughs
Trembles in the great joy of green,
But does not screen
The comfortable glimpse of homeward path.

We will not to our ancient foe
Yield all this happiness; it lies
Shielded from sickle and from snow
And all the menace of the skies.

At night I shall watch over thee,
The future safe beneath thy breast,
And after autumn there shall be
Dayspring, when for each other's sake
We shall awake
And follow Love beyond the unknown west.

LOUIS GINSBERG

Louis Ginsberg was born at Newark, New Jersey, October 1, 1896. He was educated at Rutgers College and received his M.A. at Columbia University, 1924. Since 1918 he has been teaching in the high schools of New Jersey and was, for a while, editor of a book page on the *Newark Ledger*.

His volume, *The Attic of the Past* (1920), is frankly immature. But, half-buried beneath juvenile echoes, there are several lyrics of smooth promise. Ginsberg's recent work begins to fulfill the expectation. Obviously influenced by the brightly colored simplicities of Lizette Woodworth Reese, Ginsberg has the gift of song. And if the music is not entirely his own, at least he knows how it should be sung.

A QUIET STREET AFTER RAIN

Glittering keen, all things appear
Clairvoyant, carved, and crystal-clear.
Happy to watch the raindrops cease,
Houses are honeycombed with peace;
And dazzling with a blazing show,
Windows are pelting suns below.
Colors are ambushing the sense
With silent, flaming eloquence,
While every front-yard lawn is seen
Twinkling a myriad tongues of green.
Marvelous, too, it is to see
A rose-bud dipped in deity!
Nearby a spider has begun
Upon a fence to thread the sun.
The street is hushed, though far off steals
The powdery, crumbling sound of wheels . . .
Till Time, who loiters by to scrawl
A warning on a garden wall,

Lingers to watch in strange amaze
How quiet loveliness can blaze—
How immortality can be
Familiar as a fence or tree!

HOWARD McKINLEY CORNING

Howard McKinley Corning was born October 23, 1896, on a farm a few miles west of Lincoln, Nebraska. He spent the years of his youth in Ohio, but his schooling there was limited on account of ill-health. In 1919 his family journeyed to "the epic greenland of Oregon," where he took up his residence on Mount Tabor on the edge of Portland. It was here that he became a florist by vocation, raised prize poultry and composed most of his verse.

His first volume, *These People* (1926), placed Corning as the leader of the group of young Oregon poets, a group which expressed itself through the work of H. L. Davis (whose "Primapara" received one of the prizes awarded by *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*), Borghild Lee, Charles Oluf Olsen, Ethel Romig Fuller. Corning's equipment was greater than those of his fellows. Strangely enough, though *These People* was strongly local and Western in character, it was not without its foreign—and New England—influences. The inflection of E. A. Robinson directs though it does not dominate Corning's periods; in the subsequent poems the bantering metaphysics of Robert Frost are apparent. These lift Corning's preoccupations above a too rigid reporting and save him from a tendency to fall into monotonous reflections of monotony.

In an era of accomplished versifiers Corning reaches an accomplishment past method. His faults are accentual rather than integral. The substance of his work is solid; his competence is obvious; and his spirit convinces with an assured sincerity.

PRUNING VINES

In February, when the sap's below
The inattentive earth, I take my shears
And prune away the too-audacious years.
It's grapes I want, and not mere leafy show.
I trim the trailing year's growth to a span,
With only laterals intact for crop;
A snip or two and I know where to stop
To bring a harvest where my hooks began.

It takes some fortitude to cut a vine
Half into dead ends for the cloying mold,
Where growth takes profit as the shears take hold,
Cutting the heart a little . . . as I cut mine.
But since it's grapes I want, I understand
How to rebuke the heart to fill the hand.

AUTUMN BIRD

In autumn pastures where a bird had flown
I sought behind the curtains of the wind.
It wasn't any bird that I had known.
I followed it to leave my heart alone.

What bird it was it swiftly interlined
The meadow fence, and lo,
It left me thinking that my eyes were blind
Losing a bird so quickly, undefined.

It may have been that autumn's waning glow
Had seared my sight. It may have been that kind
Of bird that is less bird than hint of snow.
Perhaps it was the autumn I saw go.

E. E. CUMMINGS

E. E. (Edward Estlin) Cummings, born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1896, first attracted considerable attention by his curiously punctuated and even more strangely spaced poems in *The Dial*. What was most pronounced in his experiments was an eccentricity of pattern intended to accentuate a startling idiom. Because of these superficial oddities, Cummings was soon attacked by the orthodox as a literary nihilist and hailed by his misled admirers as a new leader of "the left wing." Cummings received, in fact, almost every sort of criticism except a detached one.

An unpartisan appraisal reveals several facts. First, Cummings is no more radical than any poetic experimenter who, attempting certain verbal effects, commits errors in emphasis and proportion. His preoccupation with typographical design has often tricked him; much of his work suffers because of his distortions, and that part of it which succeeds is successful in spite of, and not because of, its form. Second, he seems utterly incapable of self-criticism;

his work, whether in an eruptive or quiet vein, has both the verve and the brashness of adolescence. It is evident that Cummings is extremely fecund, and so it is not strange that his first book, *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923), is a jumble of imaginative exuberance, cool precision and archaic affectations. His is a mind which is, in quick succession, lyrical, fantastic, grotesque, pathetic, savage. His distorted punctuation is significant of esthetic immaturity. This breaking up of words which have an integrity only as long as they are joined, and denoting the first person singular with a small i, fail to achieve either emphasis or modesty. In destroying what are usually essentially simple patterns, Cummings is likely to provoke the reader to nothing more than irritation. As has been implied, beneath his surface eccentricities which are responsible for his notoriety, Cummings' emotions are not at all bizarre; often they are actually banal. Unstrangled by the malformed calligrams adapted from Apollinaire, one detects a clean and distinct voice. Cummings is, after all, not so far from orthodoxy; his couplets remain couplets, even though he wedges white paper between them, and his appealingly youthful catalog of his lady's charms loses nothing by appearing in a form as regular as Villon's.

Above all, this poet exhibits a genuine gift of fresh imagination. His is undoubtedly a rhetorical language, but the rhetoric of Cummings has as fine a swing as any since Swinburne. It would be a pity if the annoyance caused by Cummings' visual disorganizations were to render the reader deaf to phrases as persuasive as, "Thy fingers make early flowers of all things," "The bulge and nuzzle of the sea," "Thy mouth is a chord of crimson music," "Thy forehead is a flight of flowers," "In the street of the sky, night walks, scattering poems," "Thoughts more white than wool," "Spring comes—the lean and definite houses are troubled," "The sea through her blind miles of crumbling silence."

The Enormous Room (1922), which preceded the others, is a novel, a brilliantly realized study of character against an intensified background of the War. Except for a few passages, it is orthodox in form.

Cummings' first volume of poetry was succeeded by *XLI Poems* (1925), the privately printed *&* (1925)—the sections of which were properly divided into A, N, and D—and *is 5* (1926), evidently so-called since this is volume five of Cummings' works. These, and his phantasmagoric play *him*, may, as Laura Riding and Robert Graves declare in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, "be considered conveniently to illustrate the divorce of advanced contemporary poetry from the common-sense standards of ordinary intelligence" and that "his only fault is that he has tried to do two things at once: to remain loyal to the requirements of the

poetic mind for clearness, and to get the ordinary reading public to call the result 'poetry.'" It is to be suspected, however, that Cummings is little concerned with "the ordinary reading public" and cares more for his own pleasure in the mixing of grave and piquant. This mixture is the principal component of all his writing. Whatever the surface differences, whether the piece is a brusque satire or an involved drama, there is the same serious intent disguised by jig-saw typography, the same school-boy nose-thumbing interrupting a romantic and unashamed tenderness. Here, essentially, is a genuine and frequently sentimental lyricist, even though he tries to hide the fact by uttering his songs in a syncopated staccato, splitting syllables with the punctuation of a cracked tambourine.

"WHEN GOD LETS MY BODY BE"

when god lets my body be

From each brave eye shall sprout a tree
fruit that dangles therefrom

the purpled world will dance upon
Between my lips which did sing

a rose shall beget the spring
that maidens whom passion wastes

will lay between their little breasts
My strong fingers beneath the snow

into strenuous birds shall go
my love walking in the grass

their wings will touch with her face
and all the while shall my heart be

With the bulge and nuzzle of the sea

SUNSET

stinging
gold swarms
upon the spires
silver

chants the litanies the
great bells are ringing with rose
the lewd fat bells
and a tall

wind
is dragging
the
sea

with

dream

-S

IMPRESSION—IV

the hours rise up putting off stars and it is
dawn
into the street of the sky light walks scattering poems

on earth a candle is
extinguished the city
wakes
with a song upon her
mouth having death in her eyes

and it is dawn
the world
goes forth to murder dreams. . . .

i see in the street where strong
men are digging bread
and i see the brutal faces of
people contented hideous hopeless cruel happy

and it is day,

in the mirror
i see a frail
man
dreaming
dreams
dreams in the mirror

and it
is dusk on earth

a candle is lighted
and it is dark.
the people are in their houses
the frail man is in his bed
the city

sleeps with death upon her mouth having a song in her eyes
the hours descend,
putting on stars. . . .

in the street of the sky night walks scattering poems

LA GUERRE

I

the bigness of cannon
is skillful,

but i have seen
death's clever enormous voice
which hides in a fragility
of poppies. . . .

i say that sometimes
on these long talkative animals
are laid fists of huger silence

I have seen all the silence
filled with vivid noiseless boys

at Roupy
i have seen
between barrages,

the night utter ripe unspeaking girls.

II

O sweet spontaneous
earth how often have
the
doting
fingers of
prurient philosophers pinched
and
poked
thee
, has the naughty thumb
of science prodded
thy
beauty , how
often have the religions taken
thee upon their scraggy knees
squeezing and

buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
gods
(but
true
to the incomparable
couch of death thy
rhythmic
lover

thou answerest

them only with
spring)

CHANSON INNOCENT

I

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame baloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old baloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing
from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and
the
goat-footed

baloonman whistles
far
and
wee

ALWAYS BEFORE YOUR VOICE

Always before your voice my soul
half-beautiful and wholly droll
is as some smooth and awkward foal,
whereof young moons begin
the newness of his skin,

so of my stupid sincere youth
the exquisite failure uncouth
discovers a trembling and smooth
Unstrength, against the strong
silences of your song;

or as a single lamb whose sheen
of full unsheared fleece is mean
beside its lovelier friends, between
your thoughts more white than wool
My thought is sorrowful;

but my heart smote in trembling thirds
of anguish quivers to your words,
As to a flight of thirty birds
shakes with a thickening fright
the sudden fooled light.

it is the autumn of a year:
When the thin air is stooped with fear,
across the harvest whitely peer
empty of surprise
death's faultless eyes

(whose hand my folded soul shall know
while on faint hills do frailly go
The peaceful terrors of the snow,
and before your dead face
which sleeps, a dream shall pass)

and these my days their sounds and flowers
Fall in a pride of petaled hours,
like flowers at the feet of mowers
whose bodies strong with love
through meadows hugely move.

yet what am i that such and such
mysteries very simply touch
me, whose heart-wholeness overmuch
Expects of your hair pale,
a terror musical?

while in an earthless hour my fond
soul seriously yearns beyond
this fern of sunset frond on frond
opening in a rare
Slowness of gloried air. . . .

The flute of morning stilled in noon—
noon the implacable bassoon—
now Twilight seeks the thrill of moon,
washed with a wild and thin
despair of violin.

WOMEN

Women have no wilderness in them,
They are provident instead,
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts
To eat dusty bread.

They do not see cattle cropping red winter grass,
They do not hear
Snow water going down under culverts
Shallow and clear.

They wait, when they should turn to journeys,
They stiffen, when they should bend.
They use against themselves that benevolence
To which no man is friend.

They cannot think of so many crops to a field
Or of clean wood cleft by an ax.
Their love is an eager meaninglessness
Too tense, or too lax.

They hear in every whisper that speaks to them
A shout and a cry.
As like as not, when they take life over their door-sills
They should let it go by.

DECORATION

A macaw preens upon a branch outspread
With jewelry of seed. He's deaf and mute.
The sky behind him splits like gorgeous fruit
And claw-like leaves clutch light till it has bled.
The raw diagonal bounty of his wings
Scrapes on the eye color too chafed. He beats
A flattered tail out against gauzy heats;
He has the frustrate look of cheated kings.
And all the simple evening passes by:
A gillyflower spans its little height
And lovers with their mouths press out their grief.
The bird fans wide his striped regality
Prismatic, while against a sky breath-white
A crystal tree lets fall a crystal leaf.

STATUE AND BIRDS

Here, in the withered arbor, like the arrested wind,
Straight sides, carven knees,
Stands the statue, with hands flung out in alarm
Or remonstrances.

Over the lintel sway the woven bracts of the vine
In a pattern of angles.
The quill of the fountain falters, woods rake on the sky
Their brusque tangles.

The birds walk by slowly, circling the marble girl,
The golden quails,
The pheasants closed up in their arrowy wings,
Dragging their sharp tails.

The inquietudes of the sap and of the blood are spent.
What is forsaken will rest.
But her heel is lifted,—she would flee,—the whistle of the birds
Fails on her breast.

THE ALCHEMIST

I burned my life that I might find
A passion wholly of the mind,
Thought divorced from eye and bone,
Ecstasy come to breath alone.
I broke my life to seek relief
From the flawed light of love and grief.

With mounting beat the utter fire
Charred existence and desire.
It died low, ceased its sudden thresh.
I had found unmysterious flesh—
Not the mind's avid substance—still
Passionate beyond the will.

SIMPLE AUTUMNAL

The measured blood beats out the year's delay.
The tearless eyes and heart forbidden grief,
Watch the burned, restless, but abiding leaf,
The brighter branches arming the bright day.

The cone, the curving fruit should fall away,
The vine-stem crumble, ripe grain know its sheaf.
Bonded to time, fires should have done, be brief,
But, serfs to sleep, they glitter and they stay.

Because not last nor first, grief in its prime
Wakes in the day, and knows of life's intent.
Anguish would break the seal set over time
And bring the baskets where the bough is bent.

Full seasons come, yet filled trees keep the sky,
And never scent the ground where they will lie.

CASSANDRA

To me, one silly task is like another.
I bare the shambling tricks of lust and pride.
This flesh will never give a child its mother,—
Song, like a wing, tears through my breast, my side,
And madness chooses out my voice again,
Again. I am the chosen no hand saves:
The shrieking heaven lifted over men,
Not the dumb earth, wherein they set their graves.

"COME, BREAK WITH TIME—"

Come, break with time,
You who were lorded
By a clock's chime
So ill afforded.
If time is allayed
Be not afraid.

I shall break, if I will.
Break, since you must.
Time has its fill,
Sated with dust.
Long the clock's hand
Burned like a brand.

Take the rocks' speed
And earth's heavy measure.
Let buried seed
Drain out time's pleasure,
Take time's decrees.
Come, cruel ease.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

Joseph Auslander was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 19, 1897. He attended St. Catherine's School in Philadelphia, the Eastern District High School in Brooklyn, Harvard University and The Sorbonne. In 1922 he became a teacher at Harvard and in 1924 his first volume, *Sunrise Trumpets*, appeared with a foreword by Padraic Colum.

The outstanding feature of *Sunrise Trumpets* is its technique. Auslander is an adroit fashioner of polished phrases, of smoothly slipping terms of speech. The music which he employs is wholly traditional; he disdains none of the older properties no matter how often they have been repeated. His book is so full of wings, water and birdsong that the general effect is nervous; it is, for the greater part, an actively exaggerated rhetoric on which he relies. But, if Auslander is a promiscuous lover rather than a critical connoisseur of words, his romantic and, it may be suspected, rather conscious intoxication scatters a profusion of arresting epithets and images. He hears a cricket "stitching the dark edge of dawn," a cock "rapping in four rickety words his challenge to the sluggard," a bell which "jargons like water dropping in a well." If his verse seems to force the emotion rather than to allow the emotion to direct it, one remembers poems like "Interval," "Dawn at the Rain's Edge," and bits of illumination like "the hawk-dark trees," "water torturing through frozen snow," "the sulky gradual querulous content of chickens puffed and blinky in the sun," "lone gulls blown about the sky," "the bronze rumor of bees," and

> Things too small for a name
> Moving through private tunnels down to their instant of flame.

As has been stated, much of this volume is rhetorical and even bombastic; verbal felicity too often becomes coddled facility.

Cyclop's Eye (1926) has sharper edges. The poet, though still inclined to overdecorate, is less determined to make his strings quiver with a continual *vibrato*. He seeks for toughness and sometimes, as in "Knockout" and "Steel," attains it. *Letters to Women* (1929) is not so fortunate. Although some of the stanzas are shrewd, the book errs on the side of adulation and affectation. The author of these missives seems to have been so overcome by his subjects that he degenerates into the confused softness from which he had almost shaken himself free. He indulges in orgies of words—of words about words—and (in the "Letter to Elinor Wylie" for example) ties himself up in phrases and metaphors as hopelessly mixed as:

> O restless heart! O deft and ravenous brain
> Whose diamond arithmetic devoured
> Confusion—only to be lost again
> After the stringent epithet had flowered!

When Auslander is not so preoccupied with overloading the lush or "stringent" epithet his verse has more quality. *Hell in Harness* (1929) is an unsuccessful overcompensation. Attempting the brusque savagery of Joseph Moncure March's *The Set-Up* and *The Wild Party*, Auslander's exaggerations are as glaring in his strained patois as in his abuse of precious words. His taste, essentially sound when considering the poetry of the past and unconcerned with himself, is proved by *The Wingèd Horse* (1927) and *The Wingèd Horse Anthology* (1929), both of which were compiled in collaboration with Frank Ernest Hill.

INTERVAL

Water pulls nervously whispering satin across cool roots, cold stones;
And a bird balances his soul on a song flash, a desperate outcry:
These are the minor chords, the monotones;
This the undefeated gesture against an armored sky.

The moment is metal; the sun crawling over it is a fly
Head down on a bronze ceiling; the hot stillness drones:
And you go sliding through green sea shafts and I
Am an old mountain warming his tired bones.

ULYSSES IN AUTUMN

I, who knew Circe, have come back
To sink a furrow in the loam;
Left twilights bellowing and black
For the soft glow of home:
To hear instead of a guttural sea
The needles of Penelope.

Still in my heart the Trojan sack
Hisses; and Helen's beauty goes
Glimmering. . . . And I have come back
To drink the stale cup of repose—
I, who knew Circe, and the wine
That turns men grunting into swine.

Can I forget Achilles? Fly
For ever from Calypso's guile?
The roaring red pit of that Eye
Drown in some domestic smile?
Cluck at a sweaty plow, who led
The white-flanked stallions of Diomed?

No, for these nerves are iron yet,
And in these veins, this caverned breast,
Echoes the howling parapet;
The trumpets will not let me rest. . . .
Think you Odysseus drowses so
Who still can bend the terrible bow.

The lotus voices call my blood
Implacable and rumorous:
All night there drums a ghostly thud
Of feet. . . . O young Telemachus,
Plead with your mother to release
My spirit fevered for the Fleece!

The trees are straining in the storm,
Spattering gold; and from the sea
The old tang creeps between the warm
Breath of her lovely flesh and me:
Each dank leaf dripping down in fire
Fuels the dream of Troy and Tyre.

I know it will be some little thing
Like wild geese in a streaming wedge
Severely beautiful; a string
Of bird-prints on the water's edge
That suddenly shall crack galley whips
And hurl me headlong to the ships!

DAWN AT THE RAIN'S EDGE

The drowsy, friendly, comfortable creak
Of axles arguing and wet spokes gleaming,
When old empty tumbrels blunder dreaming, too sleepy to speak,
Blunder down the road in the rain dreaming.

And the house-lights rub at the shining dripping shadows
Over the windows; through the drenched silver willows; everywhere:
In the sulphurous fluctuant marsh this side the steaming meadows
Where black weeds trouble the moon's drowned hair.

There is a sudden fuss of draggled feathers and the swing
Of winds in a hissing burst of raindrops; then a cry
Of color at the hill's rim; a strange bright glimmering;
And a lark talking madness in some corner of the sky.

TOUCH

I hear a cricket at my window sill
Stitching the dark edge of the dawn; and now
The climbing siren of a distant cow
Rouses the sun over the eastern hill.

A cock is rapping in four rickety words
His challenge to the sluggard; and a bell
Jargons like water dripping in a well;
And dew is in the throats of all the birds.

I need but outstretched hands and I embrace
The luxury of leaves: yet, while I lean
On their long coolness, I can feel the keen
Light of your fingers drift across my face!

ELEGY

Fled is the swiftness of all the white-footed ones
Who had a great cry in them and the wrath of speed:
They are no more among us; they and their sons
Are dead indeed.

So the river mews twist in long loops over the river,
Wheeling and shifting with the wind's and the tide's shift,
And pass in a black night—and nothing is left but a shiver
To show they were swift.

Whenever I hear a gull's throat throb in a fog,
Watch the owl's velvet swoop, the high hawk's lonely paces,
I think of the heels of him who lies like a log
And his friends under turf and the rain creeping down on
their faces

And my heart goes sick and the hell in my heart could break
To the edge of my eyes for the mates I shall not be knowing
Anywhere now though the ice booms loud in the lake
And the geese honk north again and the heron's going.

DAVID McCORD

David (Thompson Watson) McCord was born in New York City, November 15, 1897, attended public and private schools, Princeton, New Jersey, and Portland, Oregon. He graduated from Plattsburg, as Second Lieutenant in the Field Artillery in 1918, and from Harvard in 1921. He has done editorial work in Cambridge and Boston since 1923.

Oddly Enough (1926) was a volume of essays succeeded by *Floodgate* (1927). The latter volume, containing McCord's verse since 1922, is unpretentious but precise. "The Spider" illustrates McCord's gift of depicting fragmentary moments with cool nicety.

THE SPIDER

Now with a clean thread
Of a single span,
Softly he has spread
His silken fan

That shrub and thorn enclose
By the dead well,
Sweet where the sunning rose
Binds in a spell

The bee, the butterfly,
All foolish wings
That open at the sigh
Of lineal springs.

And there, against the day's
Delicious draft,
He carries in old ways
His cunning craft:

Dropping along the cool
Invisible track,
A spider with a spool
Upon his back.

A lord within the cone
Of his domain,
He reckons from his throne
The shriveled slain:

A bottle fly, the moth
Who tried to pass
The filter of his cloth
And found it glass.

CLINCH CALKINS

(Marion) Clinch Calkins was born in Evansville, Wisconsin, and, except for occasional residences in New York and abroad, lived in her own state until her marriage. Prior to that, she was engaged in many works in many places: cost-of-living survey for the U. S. Government, child-labor department of an Industrial Commission in Milwaukee, advertising in New York, art-librarian in Florence. She taught at the University of Wisconsin for four years (two in the History of Art, two in English) and, after marrying Charles Marquis Merrell, removed to Philadelphia.

Poems (1928) discloses an author who has angularity but a not too pointed incisiveness. Much of Miss Calkins' volume is in the usual key; "I Was a Maiden" and "Tribute" are traditional in mood and modulation. But the more important verses proceed from a clash of extremes; classic order and chaotic unrestraint are intensified by juxtaposition. Miss Calkins is at ease in such disrupted contrasts of the significant and the glib, and of these "Tu Ne Quaesieris" is typical.

TU NE QUAESIERIS

(*Horace I—II*)

The night rolled out like velvet
And we drove from inn to inn.
And we drank a little purple wine,
We drank a little gin,
And I leaned my sight against your eyes
And saw what lay within.

Tu ne quaesieris (*scire nefas*)

We sat at ivory tables
And we played with amber ale.
The air grew warm and heavy,
The cigarettes burned stale.
The saxophone drew through the night
A deep barbaric trail.

—quem mihi quem tibi
Finem di dederint, Leuconoe,

Then moaned the saxophone, then crooned the coon,
Why don't you try these swoonin' blues,
Take a chance
On a trance?
Your girl's a dancing fool.

nec Babylonios
Temptaris numeros.

We crossed the long veranda
And found the swaying door.
The peril streamed through us like flags.
We waved across the floor.
Although we both were silent,
We heard a steady roar.

Swoon as the coon advises,
Lean as he tantalizes,
Swing with the singing violin,
Faint with the wine and gin
Against me. Lay your ear
Upon me. Hear the roar and din.

Ut melius quidquid erit pati!
Seu plures hiemes seu tribuit Jupiter ultinam,

If day should end at evening, and night be spent alone—
But listen to the colored man moan and groan.
But listen to the banjo and the saxophone.
Night was made to keep the flesh
From thinking of the bone.
Night was never made for those
Who have to lie alone.
Rock and sway
Take a chance on a trance,
This girl's a dancing fool.

Close your ear to the shoring surge that tides upon the heart;
It ebbed and flowed before you came, it will roar when you depart.
It's naught to do with love or gin, and naught with nigger's groan.
It is the flesh remembering it's briefer than the bone.

Quae nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare
Tyrrhenum.

Tomorrow all will clear away before a clear cold light,
If this girl is any lady she will quite forget tonight.

sapias, vina liques et spatio brevi
Spem longam reseces!

The night rolls out like velvet,
Yet here we sit and wait.
It's all been said a thousand years
About the ways of fate.
The night rolls out like velvet
And it's growing very late.

Dum loquimur, fugerit invida
Aetas; carpe diem,

Listen to the banjo and the saxophone.
Listen to the colored man moan and groan:
Night was never made for those
Who have to lie alone.
Night was made to keep the flesh
From remembering the bone.

quam minimum credula postero.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Stephen Vincent Benét, the younger brother of William Rose Benét, was born at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in July, 1898. He was educated in various parts of the country, graduating from Yale in 1919.

At seventeen he published a small book containing six dramatic portraits, *Five Men and Pompey* (1915), a remarkable set of monologues which, in spite of distinct traces of Browning and Kipling, was little short of astounding, coming from a schoolboy. In Benét's next volume, *Young Adventure* (1918), one hears something more than the speech of an infant prodigy; the precocious facility has developed into a keen and individual vigor.

Heavens and Earth (1920), Benét's first representative collection, charts a greater imaginative sweep. Like his brother, the younger Benét is at his best in the decoratively grotesque; his fancy exults in running the scales between the whimsically bizarre and the lightly diabolic.

For a while Stephen Benét was too prolific to be self-critical. He published several novels (the best of which are *Jean Huguenot* and *Spanish Bayonet*), collaborated on two plays which flickered

a few nights in New York, and, unconsciously perhaps, began imitating his contemporaries. *King David*, published in book form a few months after it won *The Nation's* poetry prize for 1923, is less Benét than usual; it seems unjust that at least half the prize for this poem was not awarded to Vachel Lindsay. *Tiger Joy* (1925) betrays haste; the poet allows his rhymes to dictate and often to blur the course of his imagery. But though *Tiger Joy* is padded out with negligible verse, it contains "The Golden Corpse," a splendid octave of sonnets, "The Mountain Whippoorwill" and "The Ballad of William Sycamore," two vigorous and thoroughly American ballads.

Stephen Benét's faculty for ballad-making stood him in good stead when he came to reconstruct the Civil War period in *John Brown's Body* (1928). With this work, the author, hitherto known only to a small circle, jumped into instant popularity. Within a few months, the book had reached more than one hundred thousand people, and Benét had proved that a long narrative poem if skillfully blended could hold attention as easily as a novel. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize the year following its publication.

The weakness of *John Brown's Body* is in the treatment. Although his canvas is epical, the author sacrifices the unity of the epic by abruptly changing meters, by a cinematographic switching from one character to another, by interluding his narrative with lyrics, ballads, elegies and even prose. Nor, in this intermingling, has he perfected a style of his own; the long cadences of Sandburg and the jingling beat of Lindsay occur throughout. It is, frankly, a work of assimilation rather than creation. And yet its virtues compensate for its defects. The historical events have been more powerfully projected by others, the battle-pictures are inferior to the fictional episodes—the forgotten George Parsons Lathrop has done better in "Keenan's Charge"—but the composite is so new, the issues so impartially treated that the struggle takes on a vitality barely suggested by orthodox histories. Benét's achievement of showing the war through its impact on a large number of dramatic personae—of Jake Diefer, who sees the war in terms of his Pennsylvania farmland, of Spade, the runaway slave, of Breckenridge, the Tennessee mountaineer, of Connecticut-born Jack Ellyat—is no small triumph. If Benét sacrifices unity, he gains speed, sudden interest and the nervous contrasts which are continually stimulating. If no single passage contains that unanalyzable but unmistakable quality which permeates great poetry, the originality of the work, the vigor of its portraits, the interpolated lyrics, and the unflagging pace reveal an unusually rich talent. Whatever its flaws, *John Brown's Body* is exciting virtuosity of a high order.

RAIN AFTER A VAUDEVILLE SHOW

The last pose flickered, failed. The screen's dead white
Glared in a sudden flooding of harsh light
Stabbing the eyes; and as I stumbled out
The curtains rose. A fat girl with a pout
And legs like hams, began to sing "His Mother."
Gusts of bad air rose in a choking smother;
Smoke, the wet steam of clothes, the stench of plush,
Powder, cheap perfume, mingled in a rush.
I stepped into the lobby—and stood still,
Struck dumb by sudden beauty, body and will.
Cleanness and rapture—excellence made plain—
The storming, thrashing arrows of the rain!
Pouring and dripping on the roofs and rods,
Smelling of woods and hills and fresh-turned sods,
Black on the sidewalks, gray in the far sky,
Crashing on thirsty panes, on gutters dry,
Hurrying the crowd to shelter, making fair
The streets, the houses, and the heat-soaked air,—
Merciful, holy, charging, sweeping, flashing,
It smote the soul with a most iron clashing!
Like dragons' eyes the street-lamps suddenly gleamed,
Yellow and round and dim-low globes of flame.
And, scarce-perceived, the clouds' tall banners streamed.
Out of the petty wars, the daily shame,
Beauty strove suddenly, and rose, and flowered. . . .
I gripped my coat and plunged where awnings lowered.
Made one with hissing blackness, caught, embraced,
By splendor and by striving and swift haste—
Spring coming in with thunderings and strife—
I stamped the ground in the strong joy of life!

WINGED MAN

The moon, a sweeping scimitar, dipped in the stormy straits,
The dawn, a crimson cataract, burst through the eastern gates,
The cliffs were robed in scarlet, the sands were cinnabar,
Where first two men spread wings for flight and dared the
hawk afar.

There stands the cunning workman, the crafty, past all praise,
The man who chained the Minotaur, the man who built the Maze.
His young son is beside him and the boy's face is a light,
A light of dawn and wonder and of valor infinite.

Their great vans beat the cloven air, like eagles they mount up,
Motes in the wine of morning, specks in a crystal cup,
And lest his wings should melt apace old Daedalus flies low,
But Icarus beats up, beats up, he goes where lightnings go.

He cares no more for warnings, he rushes through the sky,
Braving the crags of ether, daring the gods on high,
Black 'gainst the crimson sunset, gold over cloudy snows,
With all Adventure in his heart the first winged man arose.

Dropping gold, dropping gold, where the mists of morning rolled,
On he kept his way undaunted, though his breaths were stabs of cold,
Through the mystery of dawning that no mortal may behold.

Now he shouts, now he sings in the rapture of his wings,
And his great heart burns intenser with the strength of his desire,
As he circles like a swallow, wheeling, flaming, gyre on gyre.

Gazing straight at the sun, half his pilgrimage is done,
And he staggers for a moment, hurries on, reels backward, swerves
In a rain of scattered feathers as he falls in broken curves.

Icarus, Icarus, though the end is piteous,
Yet forever, yea forever, we shall see thee rising thus,
See the first supernal glory, not the ruin hideous.

You were Man, you who ran farther than our eyes can scan,
Man absurd, gigantic, eager for impossible Romance,
Overthrowing all Hell's legions with one warped and broken lance.

On the highest steeps of Space he will have his dwelling-place
In those far, terrific regions where the cold comes down like Death
Gleams the red glint of his pinions, smokes the vapor of his breath.

Floating downward, very clear, still the echoes reach the ear
Of a little tune he whistles and a little song he sings,
Mounting, mounting still, triumphant, on his torn and broken wings!

THE BALLAD OF WILLIAM SYCAMORE

(*1790-1871*)

My father, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer;
He was quick on his feet as a running deer,
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.

My mother, she was merry and brave,
And so she came to her labor,
With a tall green fir for her doctor grave
And a stream for her comforting neighbor.

And some are wrapped in the linen fine,
And some like a godling's scion;
But I was cradled on twigs of pine
In the skin of a mountain lion.

And some remember a white, starched lap
And a ewer with silver handles;
But I remember a coonskin cap
And the smell of bayberry candles.

The cabin logs, with the bark still rough,
And my mother who laughed at trifles,
And the tall, lank visitors, brown as snuff,
With their long, straight squirrel-rifles.

I can hear them dance, like a foggy song,
Through the deepest one of my slumbers,
The fiddle squeaking the boots along
And my father calling the numbers.

The quick feet shaking the puncheon-floor,
The fiddle squeaking and squealing,
Till the dried herbs rattled above the door
And the dust went up to the ceiling.

There are children lucky from dawn till dusk,
But never a child so lucky!
For I cut my teeth on "Money Musk"
In the Bloody Ground of Kentucky!

When I grew tall as the Indian corn,
My father had little to lend me,
But he gave me his great, old powder-horn
And his woodsman's skill to befriend me.

With a leather shirt to cover my back,
And a redskin nose to unravel
Each forest sign, I carried my pack
As far as a scout could travel.

Till I lost my boyhood and found my wife,
A girl like a Salem clipper!
A woman straight as a hunting-knife
With eyes as bright as the Dipper!

We cleared our camp where the buffalo feed,
Unheard-of streams were our flagons;
And I sowed my sons like apple-seed
On the trail of the Western wagons.

They were right, tight boys, never sulky or slow,
A fruitful, a goodly muster.
The eldest died at the Alamo.
The youngest fell with Custer.

The letter that told it burned my hand.
Yet we smiled and said, "So be it!"
But I could not live when they fenced the land,
For it broke my heart to see it.

I saddled a red, unbroken colt
And rode him into the day there;
And he threw me down like a thunderbolt
And rolled on me as I lay there.

The hunter's whistle hummed in my ear
As the city-men tried to move me,
And I died in my boots like a pioneer
With the whole wide sky above me.

Now I lie in the heart of the fat, black soil,
Like the seed of a prairie-thistle;
It has washed my bones with honey and oil
And picked them clean as a whistle.

And my youth returns, like the rains of Spring,
And my sons, like the wild-geese flying;
And I lie and hear the meadow-lark sing
And have much content in my dying.

Go play with the towns you have built of blocks
The towns where you would have bound me!
I sleep in my earth like a tired fox,
And my buffalo have found me.

"LOVE CAME BY FROM THE RIVERSMOKE"

(*From "John Brown's Body"*)

Love came by from the riversmoke,
When the leaves were fresh on the tree,
But I cut my heart on the blackjack oak
Before they fell on me.

The leaves are green in the early Spring,
They are brown as linsey now,
I did not ask for a wedding-ring
From the wind in the bending bough.

Fall lightly, lightly, leaves of the wild,
Fall lightly on my care,
I am not the first to go with child
Because of the blowing air.

I am not the first nor yet the last
To watch a goosefeather sky,
And wonder what will come of the blast
And the name to call it by.

Snow down, snow down, you whitefeather bird,
Snow down, you winter storm,
Where the good girls sleep with a gospel word
To keep their honor warm.

The good girls sleep in their modesty,
The bad girls sleep in their shame,
But I must sleep in a hollow tree
Till my child can have a name.

I will not ask for the wheel and thread
To spin the labor plain,
Or the scissors hidden under the bed
To cut the bearing-pain.

I will not ask for the prayer in church
Or the preacher saying the prayer,
But I will ask the shivering birch
To hold its arms in the air.

Cold and cold and cold again,
Cold in the blackjack limb,
The winds in the sky for his sponsor-men
And a bird to christen him.

Now listen to me, you Tennessee corn,
And listen to my word,
This is the first child ever born
That was christened by a bird.

He's going to act like a hound let loose
When he comes from the blackjack tree,
And he's going to walk in proud shoes
All over Tennessee.

I'll feed him milk out of my own breast
And call him Whistling Jack.
And his dad'll bring him a partridge nest,
As soon as his dad comes back.

SONG OF THE RIDERS

(From "John Brown's Body")

The years ride out from the world like couriers gone to a throne
That is too far for treaty, or, as it may be, too proud;
The years marked with a star, the years that are skin and bone.
The years ride into the night like envoys sent to a cloud.

Perhaps they dismount at last, by some iron ring in the skies,
Dismount and tie their stallions and walk with an armored tread
Where an outlaw queen of the air receives strange embassies
Under a tree of wisdom between the quick and the dead.

Perhaps they are merely gone, as the white foam flies from the bit,
But the sparkling noise of their riding is ever in our ears.—
The men who came to the maze without foreknowledge of it,
The losers and the finders, under the riding years.

They pass, and the finders lose, the losers find for a space.
There are love and hate and delusion and all the tricks of the maze.
There are always losers and finders. There is no abiding place
And the years are unreturning. But, here and there, there were days.

Days when the sun so shone that the statue gave its cry
And a bird shook wings or a woman walked with a certain mirth,
When the staff struck out a spring from the leaves that had long been dry,
And the plow as before moved on from the hilltop, but its share had opened the earth.

So the bird is caught for an instant, and so the bird escapes.
The years are not halted by it. The losers and finders wait.
The years move on toward the sunset, the tall far-trafficking shapes,
Each with a bag of news to lay at a ghostly gate.

Riders shaking the heart with the hoofs that will not cease,
Will you never lie stretched in marble, the hands crossed over the breast,
Some with hounds at your feet to show that you passed in peace,
And some with your feet on lions? It is time that you were at rest.

GEORGE O'NEIL

George O'Neil was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1898, and has lived there and in New York all of his life. He was one of the youngest editors of *The Measure* and his contributions to it were rarely without a neat if glancing touch.

His book of first poems, *The Cobbler in Willow Street*, was published in 1919. Although the dominant note is one of tentative fantasy O'Neil communicates an acrid *simplesse* in many of the lines. *The White Rooster* (1927) and *God Beguiled* (1929) are somewhat sharper though by no means angular. He continues to play delicately up and down the lyric scale; his touch is neither glassily *staccato* nor languorously *legato*. Within his limited octaves his performance is serene.

THE WHITE ROOSTER

Ah, God! To have a breast like that
To throw at day,
Thrust for the hands of dawn
To quiver and flare upon.

And a hook of gold to end you,
And a bloody flag sewn in your head,
And all yourself to arch,
And your soul a white cascade.

With yellow spirals,
Step, step, stalk,
And clutch reluctant loam,
Hard kernels and brown hens
In the brazen blue of noon.

Ah, God! Stab upward with your noise;
Tear at the sky.
With the day gone molten down his throat
And his spine a tilted flame,
What singer could not make one song
As fine as fire?

FABLE

I led him on into the frosted wood;
Stamping our feet, beneath a larch we stood,
Breathing white edifices on the air;
And nothing else was moving there.

The branches hung as if they had not known
A day when any little wind had blown.
The snow above our heads wrought wondrously
A thousand gargoyles on a tree.

Freezing, we waited by the frozen brook. . . .
"Listen" I said, and hardly dared to look.
A drift slid suddenly across the ice,
A frigid hawthorne trembled twice.

Then, slowly, through the branches, marble-veined,
A hoof, a haunch, a heavy shoulder, strained;
A head swung down into a glassy heap
And smashed it with a sideward sweep.

I could not hold my tongue: "You see the horn!
That twisted golden bone . . . the Unicorn!"
I could not hold it back. And as I spoke
A splintered universe awoke.

The thing was gone. "You saw." I spun around
To read his eyes. He kicked a knotted mound,
And all the gargoyles tumbled on his head.
"I'm numb, I'm going home," he said.

Malcolm Cowley was born August 24, 1898, at Belsano in the valley between Laurel Hill and Chestnut Ridge, Pennsylvania. He was educated in the Pittsburgh public schools, at Harvard University and the University of Montpellier. After going abroad he became identified for a while with the "left wing" group, helped edit "Secession," and contributed sporadically to the less popular magazines. Unrecognized as a creator, he became well known for his translations from the French, receiving especial praise for his version of Paul Valéry's *Variety* and Maurice Barrés' *The Sacred Hill.* It was not until his thirty-first year that he received serious appraisal as a critic and as an author of original gifts.

Blue Juniata (1929) traces, more or less chronologically, the genesis and growth of a poet. It begins in Cowley's west-central Pennsylvania and accompanies him on a fancied escape to Greenwich Village, through a further retreat (this time to Europe during the *Valuta* years of 1920-1924), a revulsion from self-imposed exile, to the final return. It has, therefore, the round development characteristic of the novel, a continuity and expansion one seldom finds in a book of poems. The changes of scene, moreover, are reflected in the changes of tone, attack, attitude. Thus the first and, in many ways, the best section is sensitive and even lyrical; the second records that sentimental attachment to the sordid which, appropriate to youth, is a feverish and inverted nostalgia; the third registers a natural though somewhat elegant scorn for the *Valutaschweine* and the unrealities of a life which "ceased to have any values, only prices"; the fourth is a mixed paean and protest, a reaction to the speeded-up, machine-jazz-driven, overstimulated metropolis of "lasting impermanences"; the fifth and concluding section is the coda, self-described by its subtitle "Old Melodies: Love and Death."

Here is the material for a searching work and, even in the most experimental pages, there is nothing superficial about Cowley. But, except in the first section and parts of the last, Cowley penetrates fewer surfaces than he leaves undisturbed. This is chiefly due to his method which is disruptive and to an idiom which is staccato and often feverish. Cowley himself is quick to forestall his critics, saying in one instance, "I have ceased to value many of these poems; their emotions and their technique are too impermanent," and in another, "Our writings . . . had other qualities that were more questionable—a sort of crooked sentiment, a self-protective smirk." Much of this is the poetry of adolescence, but the adolescent who was responsible for "Kelly's Barroom," "Nocturne," and "Free Clinic" could turn, a few years

later, to expression as ripe as "Three Hills" and as simple-startling as "Two Swans."

The title-poem, "Mine No. 6" and "The Farm Died," are further advances. They mark, with increasing confidence, the poet's attempt to record the conflict between time and timelessness. The accents of Cummings, Aiken, Eliot, Laforgue, so loud in the early poems, are scarcely audible here. Even less influenced is the double sonnet "Winter" which emphasizes the authenticity of his gift.

BLUE JUNIATA

Farmhouses curl like horns of plenty, hide
lean paintless shanks against a barn, or crouch
empty in the shadow of a mountain. Here
there is no house at all—

Only the bones of a house,
lilacs growing beside them,
roses in clumps between them,
honeysuckle over;
a door, a crooked chimney,
mud-chinked, a yawning fireplace,
the skeleton of a pine;

a railroad thirty yards from the empty door.

I heard a railroad section-man playing on a jew's harp,
Where is now that merry party I remember long ago?
Nelly was a lady . . . twice . . . *Old Black Joe,*
as if he laid a hand upon my shoulder,
saying:
"Your father lived here long ago;
your father's father built the house, lies buried
under the pine—"
Sing *Nelly was a lady*
. . . *Blue Juniata* . . . *Old Black Joe.*

For sometimes a familiar music hammers
like blood against the eardrums, paints a mist
across the eyes, as if the smell of lilac,
moss-roses and the past became a music
made visible, a monument of air.

THE FARM DIED

I watched the agony of a mountain farm,
a gangrenous decay:
the farm died with the pines that sheltered it;
the farm died when the woodshed rotted away.

It died to the beat of a loose board on the barn
that flapped in the wind all night;
nobody came to drive a nail in it.
The farm died in a broken window-light,

a broken pane upstairs in the guest bedroom,
through which the autumn rain
beat down all night upon the Turkey carpet;
nobody thought to putty in a pane.

Nobody nailed another slat on the corncrib;
nobody mowed the hay;
nobody came to mend the rusty fences.
The farm died when the two boys went away,

or maybe lived till the old man was buried,
but after it was dead I loved it more,
though poison sumac grew in the empty pastures,
though ridgepoles fell, and though November winds
came all night whistling through an open door.

MINE NO. 6

They scoured the hill with steel and living brooms
of fire, that nothing living might persist;
here crouch their cabins; here the tipple looms
uncompromising, black against the mist.

All day the wagons lumber past, the wide
squat wheels hub deep, the horses strained and still;
the headlong rain pours down all day to hide
the blackened stumps, the ulcerated hill.

Beauty, perfection, I have loved you fiercely
—even in this windy slum, where fear

drips from the eaves like August rain, and scarcely
a leaf sprouts, and a universe of pain
labors to bear its stillborn fruit—even here
. . . your long white cruel fingers at my brain.

WINTER: TWO SONNETS

I

The year swings over slowly, like a pilot
southward now driving from the cold and dark
toward vertical suns and days of briefer twilight
and lights less promptly lighted in the park,

more definite nights, and days more sharply ending.
. . . How shrouded, empty of voice, the streets appear
in these December dusks, their skies distending
till Snow falls at the turning of the year.

Only in a dead city one man waking,
who tried to read the city by the glow
of towers feebly luminous and seeking
God in the skies grown suddenly bright with snow,

who listened, till he heard the city speaking
in mortuary whispers to the snow.

II

When little daily winds have died away,
and turkeys climb to roost in the apple tree,
across the snow night creeps so gradually
no eye can mark the cornerstone of day.

Now tightly draw the blinds against the dark
and see in lamplight how the room awakes,
Listen . . . through the tangible silence breaks,
out of the woodlot, a dog-fox's bark.

A creak of rusty hinges in the wind:
his voice was like the rasping of a door,
and when it ceased the darkness instantly

became so hugely silent that behind
a final range of hills we heard the sea
growling with all his voices at the shore.

JOSEPH MONCURE MARCH

Joseph Moncure March was born July 27, 1899, in New York City. He attended Lawrenceville and graduated from Amherst in 1921. His experiences as a private in France during the War gave his later work an authenticity which sets it apart from false and facile jingoism.

It was not until the publication of *The Wild Party* (1928) that March embarked on a literary career. Although the volume was privately published, it reached an unusual public and excited controversy in England as well as America. This extended poem was followed by *The Set-Up* (1928) another long poem which, not limited to a special audience, established March's position as one of the most interesting of the younger poets. Both volumes vibrate with energy; the rhythm is extraordinarily supple; rhyme is used with almost explosive effect; the pace throughout is breathless. But although the speed is indubitable, it is not the outstanding feature. The characterizations, brusque and brilliant, often accomplished in two lines, show the author as one who registers poetry in syncopated condensations.

Although most of the critics admitted March's sharpness and power of projecting a swift story, they were more reserved in according him status as a poet. That he deserved the title was proved by the publication of *Fifteen Lyrics* (1929). The volume is seemingly a *volte face* in which March suddenly changes from a hard-hitting narrator to a pure singer. The change, however, was not due to any revulsion, for it was as a lyricist—although an unpublished one—that March began, all of the "new" poems having been written before the publication of *The Wild Party*. The same pictorial effectiveness with an unexpected sensitivity distinguish these casual songs and keep March from being placed in any superficial category. His performance is matched by his potentialities.

SUDDEN STORM

Under the seed of rain sowers
The streets burst into crystal flowers.
Papers flap torn, white
Wings in bewildered flight.

Black mushroom shapes walk
Each on a human stalk.
The sowers pass. The crystal crop
Vanishes. The fungi drop.
Strange fragrance is the sole token
Of enchantment made, enchantment broken.
Curtain. After a brief pause
Distant thunder stamps applause.

CHARITY

Last night a thin wind
Snuffed at my palms,
And whined like a beggar
Asking for alms.

So I took out and tossed him
An old letter
Which he carried off,
And we both felt better.

NOCTURNE

Silence. But the dark stirs
Uneasily. Like golden burrs
Lamps cling with slender bright
Barbs on the cloak of night.
Around the lamps, pale green
Leaves droop. Unseen
Blossoms throw a fine snare
Of fragrance on the still air.
With notes like opening flowers
Slow bells chime the hours.
Presently graves will yawn
And skeletons will walk till dawn.

CITY AUTUMN

The air breathes frost. A thin wind beats
Old dust and papers down gray streets
And blows brown leaves with curled-up edges
At frightened sparrows on window ledges.

A snow-flake falls like an errant feather:
A vagabond draws his cloak together,
And an old man totters past with a cane
Wondering if he'll see Spring again.

HELENE MULLINS

Helene Mullins was born July 12, 1899, at New Rochelle, New York, and was educated in convent boarding-schools. She wrote poems at the age of eleven and in 1922 began publishing in the magazines. She soon attracted attention in F. P. A.'s column, "The Conning Tower," where her poems appeared for several years on the average of more than one a week. In collaboration with her sister, Marie Gallagher, she published a novel, *Paulus Fy* (1924).

Earthbound and Other Poems (1929) shows that, technically, there is little that Miss Mullins cannot do; the range of her themes is matched by the dexterity of her forms. From a free lyric to the tightest of stanzas, she trips without losing a strict balance. She is at home in the rondeau, the ballade, the chant royal; she even writes a sestina which is not choked to death by its constricting repetitions. Her facility is both her charm and her handicap. All proceeds smoothly, self-confidently, without those little differences of *timbre* that distinguish one poet from another. One is never surprised by a daring metaphor—Miss Mullins's fancy progresses but it does not leap—one misses an unexpected image, a sudden color, a new sound. But if Miss Mullins is content to let the theme develop with practically no ornament, her gamut is lavish and in her verse the craftsman and the spontaneous singer find equal expression. Such poems as "Homecoming" and "Only the Self-Confident" are not ashamed to bear their truths undisguised.

Convent Girl (1929), written in sincere if undistinguished prose, is an obviously autobiographical record which occasioned no little comment, especially among the Catholic clergy.

Balm of Gilead, which appeared in 1930, continues to exhibit—and sometimes to exploit—Miss Mullins' facility.

THE POET RESOLVES TO BECOME A MEMBER OF SOCIETY

There was a time I could be satisfied
With blossoms I could tear from any bough.
There was a time when any grass beside
A singing stream was quite enough for me.

But now no more such simple things, but now,
Though it may not be forever, I am tired
Of all the quiet ways I once desired.
Though it may not be forever, I will be
A stranger to myself from this time out.
I will go in silks that whisper of my wealth
Among the rich; the gay shall talk about
My folly that is rasher than their own.
By wit and ingenuity and stealth,
I will gather friends from all the crowded places,
To mock my pride and imitate my graces;
And all shall know me, save myself alone.

HOMECOMING

After the fair, far places, this is best:
The well-known language and the labeled door,
The peace that waits for him who asks no more.
To be at home, to be no more a guest,
Though loved, though honored; forever to have turned
From pleasures mixed with mystery, and have come
Into one's own again—this is the sum
Of earthly good. Though we may be concerned
A little with the specious ecstasy
Of alien friendships, and believe the soul
Of beauty sleeps at some exotic goal
Beset by briars, we come inevitably,
Surfeited with our brilliant loneliness,
Back to the rich and simple commonplace,
Yield to the tyranny of law, retrace
The ever-flowering grounds. O measureless
The bounty of a universe wherein
One who has had his fill of glamor at last,
May travel back again and find the past,
And be at home among his kind and kin.

ONLY THE SELF-CONFIDENT

The anxious and distrustful constantly
Require that their companions speak their praise,
Holding it as a gross discourtesy
If any disagree with them or gaze

A little beyond the sanctuary where
They keep alight the lamps of egotism.
Upon their tongues the efficacious prayer,
Upon their thumbs alone the sacred chrism.

Only the stern self-confident can hold
Their peace amidst the clamor, nor betray
Their capabilities; can sit unmoved,
With all around them trembling to have told
The utmost of their merits; only they
Can bear to leave their strength unguessed, unproved.

LÉONIE ADAMS

Léonie Adams was born in Brooklyn, New York, December 9, 1899. After a public school preparation she became a member of the class of 1922 at Barnard College, supported herself in New York in various capacities for five years, was awarded a "traveling fellowship" by the Guggenheim Foundation, and went abroad for two years in 1928. At Barnard she wrote her first published poems "in secret." While still an undergraduate, her remarkable "April Mortality" was printed in *The New Republic*, but, although this would have been sufficient stimulus for most young authors to rush into print, Miss Adams remained more reticent than ever and rarely submitted any of her verse for publication.

It was only through the persuasion of two or three friends that her volume, *Those Not Elect* (1925), was made ready for the press. The author's evasion of "realism" is apparent in all of her poetry. The poems themselves are of two sorts: the younger and simpler verses, full of a shy ecstasy, and the later, more metaphysical expressions of a rare and not lightly communicated wonder. Without imitating the Elizabethans, Miss Adams has caught something of the quality of Webster and Vaughan. But whatever her style, whether she is direct as in "Home-Coming" or more difficult as in "The Horn," her sensitivity makes even the obscure passages a succession of inevitable images. Her most candid descriptions take on an unearthly and intensified air; even her statement of a landscape, or the performance of a tragedy, or "the pointed grass" drinking the light "till light brimmed even," or the old cheating of the sun is translated in lines both pure and suggestive. One may mistake her meaning; there is no mistaking the beauty of her imagination which lifts emotion, holding it, as it were, in

suspense. There is not a line in her first book which is without distinction.

The same is true of *High Falcon* (1929). This is abstract poetry in the highest sense; the word is more than a word; the letter is uplifted by pure spirit. The lyrical line, carried on wave after wave of music, transcends personality. The ecstasy, however, is no less ecstatic for being disembodied; every phrase carries its import of intensities, of vistas larger than the scene, of meaning beyond meaning. It is a rarified atmosphere which Miss Adams breathes and only a height-loving reader can venture with her into that fine air. "Twilit Revelation," "Bell Tower," "Sundown," "Country Summer" are a few of the poems in which the heart "extracts the spirit of the temporal." Neither sense nor the senses can wholly interpret this poetry, but every figure and accent compel us with authority. What, at first glance, seems obscurely metaphysical is resolved into a spiritual clarity that approaches clairvoyance. Here, we are in the presence of greatness; here matter is sanctified, "dipped in a gold stain."

This is not to imply that Miss Adams' is a purple-patched poetry. Her utterance is unique, but it is no posture of "difference," no straining singularity. On the contrary, this is verse of the most reticent dignity, in which nothing, not even the mystical note, is overstressed. Herein lies Miss Adams' danger—or rather the danger to her imitators, for, since she is obviously "a poet's poet," imitated she will be. The surface pattern is easy enough to master: the withdrawn loveliness, the muted music, the faint Elizabethanism; but, lacking her rapt and actually reverent touch, the result would be only an echo of delicate diction. Miss Adams would undoubtedly gain a wider audience were she to mix a little more flesh with her spirit, but she would lose that virginal radiance which rises from springs more profound than those of the too nimbly gushing heart.

APRIL MORTALITY

Rebellion shook an ancient dust,
  And bones bleached dry of rottenness
Said: Heart, be bitter still, nor trust
  The earth, the sky, in their bright dress.

Heart, heart, dost thou not break to know
  This anguish thou wilt bear alone?
We sang of it an age ago,
  And traced it dimly upon stone.

With all the drifting race of men
  Thou also art begot to mourn
That she is crucified again,
  The lonely Beauty yet unborn.

And if thou dreamest to have won
  Some touch of her in permanence,
'Tis the old cheating of the sun,
  The intricate lovely play of sense.

Be bitter still, remember how
  Four petals, when a little breath
Of wind made stir the pear-tree bough,
  Blew delicately down to death.

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
  Dusk went before with quiet tread;
The bare laced branches of the trees
  Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
  Like great gray sheep lay silent-wise;
Between the birch trees' gleaming arms
  The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
  And laughed as one that knew me well,
To whose more clear than crystal voice
  The frost had joined a crystal spell.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
  Dusk ran before me to its strand
And cloudily leaned forth to touch
  The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

THOUGHT'S END

I watched the hills drink the last color of light,
All shapes grow bright and wane on the pale air.
Till down the traitorous east there came the night,
And swept the circle of my seeing bare.

Its intimate beauty like a wanton's veil
Tore from the void as from an empty face.
I felt at being's rim all being fail,
And my one body pitted against space.
O heart more frightened than a wild bird's wings,
Beating at green, now is no fiery mark
Left on the quiet nothingness of things.
Be self no more against the flooding dark:
There thousandwise sown in that cloudy blot
Stars that are worlds look out and see you not.

DEATH AND THE LADY

Their bargain told again

Death to the Lady said
While she to dancing-measures still
Would move, while beauties on her lay,
Simply as dews the buds do fill,
Death said: "Stay!
Tell me, Lady,
If in your breast the lively breath
May flicker for a little space,
What ransom will you give to death,
Lady?" he said.
"O not one joy, O not one grace,
And what is your will to my will?
I can outwit parched fancies still."
To Death said the Lady.

Death to that Lady said,
When blood went numb and wearily,
"In innocency dear breath you drew,
And marrow and bloom you rendered me,"
She said: "True."
"How now, Lady?"
"My heart sucked up its sweet at will,
Whose scent when substance' sweet is past,
Is lovely still, is lovely still,
Death," she said.
"For bones' reprieve the dreams go last:
Soon, soon your flowery show did part,

But preciously I cull the heart,"
Death said the Lady.

Death to that Lady said:
"Is then not all our bargain done?
Or why do you beckon me so fast
To chaffer for a skeleton
Flesh must cast,
Ghostly Lady?"
"For, Death, that I would have you drain
From my dead heart the blood that stands
So chilly in the withered vein.
And, Death," she said,
"Give my due bones into your hands."
"Beauties I claim at morning-prime,
But the lack-luster in good time."
Death said to the Lady.

TWILIT REVELATION

This hour was set the time for heaven's descent
Come drooping toward us on the heavy air,
The sky, that's heaven's seat above us bent,
Blue faint as violet-ash, you near me there
In nether space so drenched in goblin blue,
I could touch Hesperus as soon as you.

Now I perceive you lapt in singling light,
Washed by that blue which sucks whole planets in,
And hung like those top jewels of the night,
A mournful gold too high for love to win.
And you, poor brief, poor melting star, you seem
Half sunk, and half to brighten in that stream.

And these rich-bodied hours of our delight
Show like a moth-wing's substance when the fall
Of confine-loosing, blue unending night
Extracts the spirit of this temporal.
So space can pierce the crevice wide between
Fast hearts, skies deep-descended intervene.

GHOSTLY TREE

O beech, unbind your yellow leaf, for deep
The honeyed time lies sleeping, and lead shade
Seals up the eyelids of its golden sleep.
Long are your flutes, chimes, little bells at rest,
And here is only the cold scream of the fox,
Only the hunter following on the hound,
And your quaint-plumagèd,
The bird that your green happy boughs lapped round,
Bends south its soft bright breast.

Before the winter and the terror break,
Scatter the leaf that broadened with the rose,
Not for a tempest, but a sigh to take.
Four nights to exorcise the thing that stood,
Bound by these frail which dangle at your branch,
They ran a frosty dagger to its heart,
And it, wan substance,
No more remembered it might cry, or start,
Or stain a point with blood.

THE HORN

In coming to the feast I found
A venerable silver-throated horn,
Which were I brave enough to sound,
Then all as from that moment born
Would breathe the honey of this clime,
And three times merry in their time,
Would praise the virtue of that horn.

The mist is risen like thin breath,
The young leaves of the ground smell chill,
So faintly are they strewn on death,
The road I came down a west hill.
But none can name as I can name
A little golden-bright thing flame,
Since bones have caught their marrow chill.

And in a thicket passed me by,
In the black brush a running hare,
Having a specter in his eye,
That sped in darkness to the snare;
And who but I can know in pride,
The heart set beating in the side
Has but the wisdom of a hare?

THE RIVER IN THE MEADOWS

Crystal parting the meads,
A boat drifted up it like a swan,
Tranquil, lovely, its bright front to the waters,
A slow swan is gone.

Full waters, O flowing silver,
Pure, level with the clover,
It will stain drowning a star,
With the moon it will brim over.

Running through lands dewy and shorn,
Cattle stoop at its brink,
And every fawny-colored throat
Will sway its bells and drink.

I saw a boat sailing the river
With a tranced gait; it seemed
Loosed by a spell from its moorings,
Or a thing the helmsman dreamed.

They said it would carry no traveler,
But the vessel would go down,
If a heart were heavy-winged,
Or the bosom it dwelt in, stone.

COUNTRY SUMMER

Now the rich cherry whose sleek wood
And top with silver petals traced,
Like a strict box its gems encased,
Has split from out that cunning lid,
All in an innocent green round,
Those melting rubies which it hid;

With moss ripe-strawberry-encrusted,
So birds get half, and minds lapse merry
To taste that deep-red lark's-bite berry,
And blackcap-bloom is yellow-dusted.

The wren that thieved it in the eaves
A trailer of the rose could catch
To her poor droopy sloven thatch,
And side by side with the wren's brood,—
O lovely time of beggars' luck—
Opens the quaint and hairy bud.
And full and golden is the yield
Of cows that never have to house,
But all night nibble under boughs,
Or cool their sides in the moist field.

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,
The warm farm-baking smell blows round;
Inside and out and sky and ground
Are much the same; the wishing star,
Hesperus, kind and early-born,
Is risen only finger-far.
All stars stand close in summer air,
And tremble, and look mild as amber;
When wicks are lighted in the chamber
You might say stars were settling there.

Now straightening from the flowery hay,
Down the still light the mowers look;
Or turn, because their dreaming shook,
And they waked half to other days,
When left alone in yellow-stubble,
The rusty-coated mare would graze.
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born;
Another thought can come to mind,
But like the shivering of the wind,
Morning and evening in the corn.

BELL TOWER

I have seen, O desolate one, the voice has its tower,
The voice also, builded at secret cost,
Its temple of precious tissue; not silent then,
Forever. Casting silence in your hour.

There marble boys are leant from the light throat,
Thick locks that hang with dew, and eyes dew-lashed,
Dazzled with morning,—angels of the wind,
With ear a-point for the enchanted note.

And these at length shall tip the hanging bell,
And first the sound must gather in deep bronze,
Till, rarer than ice, purer than a bubble of gold,
It fill the sky to beat on an airy shell.

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Bleak the February light
On the dark threshold spread,
The frost stood thick against the lock,
The clock for the great cold stopped dead,
When old wits idle with their luck
Lay singing in the bed,
That heard, while white frost span by night,
A pigeon happy with its bread.

And sang: I wakened to a sound
Which the streams make at thaw,
And pity on the shape I found
Inside a looking-glass with light.
For looking on my heart I saw,
A time before the break of day,
And looking won to second-sight,
And cast my character away.

The fields lie bound beneath the sky,
The hedge-top and the furrow freeze,
And still old plow-wheels sigh,
As sweet as bones which stretch from sleep,

And sooner than their sound is by,
Will come a noise of yellow bees
When the hay is nodding deep,
And some wise throat that laughs for ease.

Till there was a soft voice which spoke:
Hush, for every sound you tell
Is out of an old horn I blew.
I have come down to see who woke
On earth's cold brink when night was through.
No wilder chance befell,
Than the starry breath I drew.
I am Gabriel.

SUNDOWN

This is the time lean woods shall spend
A steeped-up twilight, and the pale evening drink,
And the perilous roe, the leaper to the west brink,
Trembling and bright, to the caverned cloud descend.

Now shall you see pent oak gone gusty and frantic,
Stooped with dry weeping, ruinously unloosing
The sparse disheveled leaf, or reared and tossing
A dreary scarecrow bough in funeral antic.

Aye, tatter you and rend,
Oak heart, to your profession mourning, not obscure
The outcome, not crepuscular, on the deep floor,
Sable and gold match lusters and contend.

And rags of shrouding will not muffle the slain.
This is the immortal extinction, the priceless wound
Not to be staunched; the live gold leaks beyond,
And matter's sanctified, dipped in a gold stain.

NIGHT-PIECE

The moon above the milky field
Gleaning moves her one slant light,
The wind weeps from the cloud:
Then, weeping wind, unshroud

Pale Cassiopeia, blow
The true-swung pole-lamp bright.
To this room a midnight's come
Which speaks but with the beating clock,
While on glistening paws the mouse
Creeps night-master of the house.
Rust shall eat away the lock,
The door sag from the garner hoard,
And the sleeper lie unsphered.
Time's wheel frets on his finger still,
He bends no more his weight with time's.
He wept as long as wind,
And sleeps with an indifferent will.
Not airs, not climes unclose, behind
The lashes' scarcely faltering jet,
Which star he sees since Hesper set.

LULLABY

Hush, lullay,
Your treasures all
Encrust with rust.
Your trinket pleasures
Fall
To dust.
Beneath the sapphire arch
Upon the grassy floor
Is nothing more
To hold,
And play is over old.
Your eyes
In sleepy fever gleam,
Your lids droop
To their dream.
You wander late alone,
The flesh frets on the bone,
Your love fails
In your breast.
Here is the pillow.
Rest.

Allen Tate (whose full name, not often admitted, is John Orley Allen Tate) was born, on November 19, 1899, in Fairfax County, Virginia, and was reared in Kentucky and Tennessee (alternately, so that to Tennesseeans he says he is a Kentuckian, and to Kentuckians, a Tennesseean), was educated in public and private schools in Louisville, Nashville, and Washington, D. C., and after some tergiversation was graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1922. Immediately thereafter, he engaged in free-lance literary criticism for which he is as well known as for his poetry. He was one of the founders, in 1922, of *The Fugitive*, sharing that distinction with John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson and a few others. An avowed believer in sectionalism, his critical acumen runs parallel to his predilections in *Stonewall Jackson: The Good Soldier* (1928) and *Jefferson Davis: His Rise and Fall* (1929). Both biographies are skillfully constructed mosaics of fact and interpretation. His reviews and essays are among the most brilliant and provocative of his generation.

Mr. Pope and Other Poems (1928) reveals a mind that is critical and complex. His Ignis Fatuus, as acknowledged in Tate's Epilogue has a "fierce latinity," and the adjective gives us an inkling of the paradox at the heart of his verse. Here Donne wrestles with Vergil; an essentially Gothic foundation shoots up into baroque efflorescences; the cultural tradition battles with vulgar aggressiveness. This clash between classicism and modernity—sublimated by Tate's transposition of romantic South and realistic North—strains to achieve a kind of harassed unity in *Mr. Pope and Other Poems.* A finesse of satire and a dissection of emotion combine to place most of the volume in the literature of wit, but poems like "Death of Little Boys" and "Ode to the Confederate Dead" are compact with feeling and so escape the category. The more mature *Poems, 1928-1931* appeared in 1932.

The verse which Tate has written subsequent to *Mr. Pope*, of which "Mother and Son" is a brilliant example, owes less to the intellectualist's conflict. Structure is still preëminent, but Tate emphasizes his form without being preoccupied with it. His method, as he himself has acknowledged, consists in playing the rôle of a hawk "gradually circling round the subject, threatening it and filling it with suspense, and finally accomplishing its demise without ever quite using the ultimate violence upon it." Always suggestive, keenly individualized, the graver poems—and many of his essays—are complete realizations of this method.

In 1930, after two years abroad on a Guggenheim Foundation award, Tate returned to Tennessee, to the town of Clarksville on the Cumberland River.

ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD

(1861-1865)

Row after row with strict impunity
The headstones barter their names to the element,
The wind whirrs without recollection;
In the riven troughs broken leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
Against the sinkage of death;
Then, in uncertainty of their election,
Of their business in the vast breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality.

Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres where these memories grow.
Think of the autumns that have come and gone,
Ambitious Novembers with the humors of the year,
With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm there:
The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you, like them, to stone,
Transforms the heaving air,
Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly, like a crab.

You know, who have waited by the wall,
The twilit certainty of an animal,
Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know, the immitigable pines, the smoky frieze
Of the sky, the sudden call; you know the rage
Of Heraclitus and Parmenides.
You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours tomorrow,
You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision
And praise the immodest circumstance
Of those who fall
Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision—
Here at this stile, once more, you see them all.

Turn your eyes into the immoderate past,
Find there the inscrutable infantry rising,
The demons out of the earth; they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall; and the sunken fields of hemp;
Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run;
In the orient of that economy
You have cursed the setting sun.

You hear the shout; the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Engulfs you like a mummy in time, whose niche
Lacks aperture.

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we, who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe,
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the dirty sons
Whose legs and arms, guts, heads and teeth
Stretched out the justice of efficiency?
The gray lean spiders come; they come and go.
In a tangle of willows without light
The singular screech-owl's tight
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

We have not sung, we shall not ever sing
In the improbable mist of nightfall
Which flies on multiple wing;
It has only a beginning and an end;
And in between the ends of distraction
Lurks mute speculation, the patient curse
That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
For the jaguar's image in a jungle pool, his victim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now
The turnstile and the decomposing wall:
The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry bush,
Riots with his tongue through the hush.
See him, what he knows—he knows it all!

MR. POPE

When Alexander Pope strolled in the city
Strict was the glint of pearl and gold sedans.
Ladies leaned out, more out of fear than pity;
For Pope's tight back was rather a goat's than man's.

One often thinks the urn should have more bones
Than skeletons provide for speedy dust;
The urn gets hollow, cobwebs brittle as stones
Weave to the funeral shell a frivolous rust.

And he who dribbled couplets like the snake
Coiled to a lithe precision in the sun,
Is missing. The jar is empty; you may break
It only to find that Mr. Pope is gone.

What requisitions of a verity
Prompted the wit and rage between his teeth
One cannot say: around a crooked tree
A mortal climbs whose name should be a wreath.

DEATH OF LITTLE BOYS

When little boys grow patient at last, weary,
Surrender their eyes immeasurably to the night,
The event will rage terrific as the sea;
Their bodies fill a crumbling room with light.

Then you will touch at the bedside, torn in two,
Gold curls now deftly intricate with gray
As the windowpane extends a fear to you
From one peeled aster drenched with the wind all day.

And over his chest the covers, in an ultimate dream,
Will mount to the teeth, ascend the eyes, press back
The locks—while round his sturdy belly gleam
The suspended breaths, white spars above the wreck:

Till all the guests, come in to look, turn down
Their palms; and delirium assails the cliff
Of Norway where you ponder, and your little town
Reels like a sailor drunk in his rotten skiff. . . .

The bleak sunshine shrieks its chipped music then
Out to the milkweed amid the fields of wheat.
There is a calm for you where men and women
Unroll the chill precision of moving feet.

MOTHER AND SON

Now all day long the man who is not dead
Hastens the dark with inattentive eyes,
The lady of the white hand, of the erect head,
Stares at the floor, leans for the son's replies
At last to her importunate womanhood,
That hand of death laid on the living bed—
Such is the fierce compositor of blood.

She waits; he dozes on the bed of sin
Where greed, avarice, anger hatched and slept
Till to their silence they were gathered in:
There, fallen with time, his wicked kin
Writhed to the passions that were never kept
In the permanent heart; and there his mother lay,
A battered marble, on his first birthday.

Fallen with time, she cannot will her hand
Up to the bed, nor break the manacle
That exile sets upon her harsh command
That he should say the time is beautiful,
Transfigured by her own devouring light:
The sick man craves the impalpable night.

Loosed betwixt eye and lid, the swimming beams
Of memory—that school of cuttlefish—
Rise to the air, plunge into the cold streams:
Rising and plunging the half-forgotten wish
To tear his heart out in some slow disgrace,
And freeze the hue of terror to her face.

Hate, misery, and fear beat off his heart
To the dry fury of the woman's mind:
The son, prone in his autumn, moves apart—
A burning seed tossed to the aimless wind.
O child, be vigilant! till towards the south,
On the flowered wall all the sweet afternoon,
That reach of sun, swift as the cottonmouth,
Strikes at the black crucifix on her breast,
Where the cold dusk comes suddenly to rest.
Mortality will speak the victor soon!

The dreary flies, lazy and casual,
Stick to the ceiling, buzz along the wall:
O heart! the spider shuffles from the mold
Between the pinks and grapes weaving his pall!
The bright wallpaper never will be old,
Peeling and curling . . . will never fall.

THE CROSS

There is a place that some men know,
I cannot see the whole of it,
Nor how men come there. Long ago
Flame burst out of a secret pit
Crushing the world with such a light
The day sky fell to moonless black,
The kingly sun to hateful night
For those, once seeing, turning back:
For love so hates mortality,
Which is the providence of life,
She will not let it blessèd be
But curses it with mortal strife,

Until beside the blinding rood
Within that world-destroying pit
—Like young wolves that have tasted blood,
Of death, men taste no more of it:
So blind in so severe a place
(All life before in the black grave)
The last alternatives they face
Of life, without the life to save,
Being from all salvation weaned—
A stag charged both at heel and head:
Who would come back is turned a fiend
Instructed by the fiery dead.

HART CRANE

Hart Crane was born in Garrettsville, Ohio, in 1899 and educated in the public schools of his state. Avoiding college, he worked in the ranks of advertising copywriters, chiefly in Cleveland and New York. In his early twenties his poetry—incomprehensible to some, extraordinary to others—began to appear in the more radical magazines.

White Buildings (1926) is obviously founded on rhetoric, but rhetoric of a new order. Influenced by Rimbaud, Poe, and Wallace Stevens—poets devoted to tonal gradations and color-values of words—Hart Crane's verbal ingenuity is often as accomplished as theirs.

Sometimes he transcends ingenuity, striking out phrases as felicitous as "Where the cedar leaf divides the sky" and "In sapphire arenas of the hills." But *White Buildings* is the record of esthetic as well as emotional conflict. Alternating between actual delineation and complete departure from representation, the verse approximates without quite achieving an "absolute" poetry. Romantic in inception, its gestures are larger than itself; as Allen Tate hints in his introduction, Crane has not yet discovered a theme to embody his uncoördinated visions.

In *The Bridge* (1930) the theme has been found. A set of disparate poems has been integrated by vital figures and national myths. The sense of time flows like a leading theme through variations in which Pocahontas, Rip Van Winkle, and the Subway are not isolated legends but significantly related phenomena. Crane's style has undergone only a slight change, but that change, necessitated by the larger work, is important. Surprise and a romantic strangeness are still principles of his work, but discipline

controls singularity; the mystical rhetoric now plays about a central organization.

Crane's influences have not been wholly discarded; one does not have to look far to recognize the color-suggestions of Stevens and the contrast-methods of Pound and Eliot. Yet it is equally evident that Crane is not spiritually persuaded by any of these, but rather by poets who might be thought their opposites. His visions—his very mottoes—are those of Blake, the Book of Job, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman. It is the spirit of Whitman, the spirit of "competent loam, the probable grass," which is apotheosized on a rising cadence and lifts a broken but finally sustained passion to prophetic rhapsody.

There will be those who will find Crane's poetry not merely tangential but cryptic. The difficulty is caused by his combination of allusiveness and allegory, especially since the allusions are often remote and the allegorical symbols personal to the point of privacy. But what Crane loses in directness he gains in implication; he has perfected a rounded locution from which the meaning is always sliding off and yet maintaining something more than the surface meaning. It is a triumph of suggestiveness, an exact inexactitude. *The Bridge*, in its lofty reach and inclusive intention, carries the rhetorician beyond himself and approaches—if such a thing is possible—a highly sophisticated, highly syncopated local epic.

After a chaotic life, he committed suicide by jumping from a steamer in the Gulf of Mexico, April 28, 1932.

VAN WINKLE

Macadam, gun-gray as the tunny's belt,
Leaps from Far Rockaway to Golden Gate:
Listen! the miles a hurdy-gurdy grinds—
Down gold arpeggios mile on mile unwinds.

Times earlier, when you hurried off to school,
—It is the same hour though a later day—
You walked with Pizarro in a copybook,
And Cortes rode up, reining tautly in—
Firmly as coffee grips the taste,—and away!

There was Priscilla's cheek close in the wind,
And Captain Smith, all beard and certainty,
And Rip Van Winkle, bowing by the way,—
"Is this Sleepy Hollow, friend—?" And he—

And Rip forgot the office hours,
and he forgot the pay;
Van Winkle sweeps a tenement
down town on Avenue A,—

The grind-organ says . . . Remember, remember
The cinder pile at the end of the backyard
Where we stoned the family of young
Garter snakes under . . . And the monoplanes
We launched—with paper wings and twisted
Rubber bands. . . . Recall—

the rapid tongues
That flittered from under the ash heap day
After day whenever your stick discovered
Some sunning inch of unsuspecting fiber—
It flashed back at your thrust, as clean as fire.

And Rip was slowly made aware
that he, Van Winkle, was not here
Nor there. He woke and swore he'd seen Broadway
a Catskill daisy chain in May—

So memory, that strikes a rhyme out of a box,
Or splits a random smell of flowers through glass—
Is it the whip stripped from the lilac tree
One day in spring my father took to me,
Or is it the Sabbatical, unconscious smile
My mother almost brought me once from church
And once only, as I recall—?

It flickered through the snow screen, blindly
It forsook her at the doorway; it was gone
Before I had left the window. It
Did not return with the kiss in the hall.

Macadam, gun-gray as the tunny's belt,
Leaps from Far Rockaway to Golden Gate . . .
Keep hold of that nickel for car-change, Rip,—
Have you got your paper—?
And hurry along, Van Winkle—it's getting late!

ROYAL PALM

Green rustlings, more-than-regal charities
Drift coolly from that tower of whispered light.
Amid the noontide's blazed asperities
I watched the sun's most gracious anchorite

Climb up as my communings, year on year
Uneaten of the earth or aught earth holds,
And the gray trunk, that's elephantine, rear
Its frondings sighing in aetherial folds.

Forever fruitless, and beyond that yield
Of sweat the jungle presses with hot love
And tendril till our deathward breath is sealed—
It grazes the horizons, launched above

Mortality—ascending emerald-bright,
A fountain at salute, a crown in view—
Unshackled, casual of its azured height
As though it soared suchwise through heaven too.

THE TUNNEL

To find the Western path
Right thro' the Gates of Wrath
—Blake.

Performances, assortments, résumés—
Up Times Square to Columbus Circle lights
Channel the congresses, nightly sessions,
Refractions of the thousand theaters, faces—
Mysterious kitchens . . . You shall search them all.
Some day by heart you'll learn each famous sight
And watch the curtain lift in hell's despite;
You'll find the garden in the third act dead,
Finger your knees—and wish yourself in bed
With tabloid crime-sheets perched in easy sight.

Then let you reach your hat
and go.

As usual, let you—also
walking down—exclaim
to twelve upward leaving
a subscription praise
for what time slays . . .

Or can't you quite make up your mind to ride;
A walk is better underneath the L for a brisk
Ten blocks or so before? But you find yourself
Preparing penguin flexions of the arms—
As usual you will meet the scuttle yawn:
The subway yawns the quickest promise home.

Be minimum then, to swim the hiving swarms
Out of the Square, the Circle burning bright—
Avoid the glass doors gyring at your right,
Where boxed alone a second, eyes take fright
—Quite unprepared rush naked back to light:
And down beside the turnstile press the coin
Into the slot. The gongs already rattle.

And so
of cities you bespeak
subways, rivered under streets
and rivers . . . In the car
the overtone of motion
underground, the monotone
of motion is the sound
of other faces, also underground—

'Let's have a pencil Jimmy—living now
at Floral Park
Flatbush—on the fourth of July—
like a pigeon's muddy dream—potatoes
to dig in the field—travlin' the town too—
night after night—the Culver line—the
girls all shaping up—it used to be—'

Our tongues recant like beaten weather vanes.
This answer lives like verdigris, like hair
Beyond extinction, surcease of the bone;
And repetition freezes—'What

'what do you want? getting weak on the links?
fandaddle daddy don't ask for change—IS THIS
FOURTEENTH? it's half-past six she said—if
you don't like my gate why did you
swing on it, why *didja*
swing on it
anyhow—'

And somehow anyhow swing—

The phonographs of hades in the brain
Are tunnels that re-wind themselves, and love—
A burnt match skating in a urinal
Somewhere above Fourteenth TAKE THE EXPRESS
To brush some new presentiment of pain—

'But I want service in this office SERVICE
I said—after
the show she cried a little afterwards but—'

Whose head is swinging from the swollen strap?
Whose body smokes along the bitten rails,
Bursts from a smoldering bundle far behind
In back forks of the chasms of the brain—
Puffs from a riven stump far out behind
In interborough fissures of the mind . . . ?

And why do I often meet your visage here,
Your eyes like agate lanterns—on and on
Below the toothpaste and the dandruff ads?
—And did their riding eyes right through your side,
And did their eyes like unwashed platters ride?
And Death, aloft—gigantically down
Probing through you toward me, O Evermore!
And when they dragged your retching flesh,
Your trembling hands that night through Baltimore—
That last night on the ballot rounds, did you,
Shaking—did you deny the ticket, Poe?

For Gravesend Manor change at Chambers Street.
The platform hurries along to a dead stop.

The intent escalator lifts a serenade
Stilly
Of shoes, umbrellas, each eye attending its shoe, then
Bolting outright somewhere above where streets
Burst suddenly in rain . . . The gongs recur:
Elbows and levers, guard and hissing door.
Thunder is galvothermic here below . . . The car
Wheels off. The train rounds, bending to a scream,
Taking the final level for the dive
Under the river—

And somewhat emptier than before,
Demented, for a hitching second, humps; then
Lets go . . . Toward corners of the floor
Newspapers wing, revolve and wing.
Blank windows gargle signals through the roar.

And does the Daemon take you home, also,
Wop washerwoman, with the bandaged hair?
After the corridors are swept, the cuspidors—
The gaunt sky-barracks cleanly now, and bare,
O Genoese, do you bring mother-eyes and hands
Back home to children and to golden hair?

Daemon, demurring and eventful yawn!
Whose hideous laughter is the bellows mirth
—Or the muffled slaughter of a day in birth—
O cruelly to inoculate the brinking dawn
With antennae toward worlds that spark and sink—
To spoon us out more liquid than the dim
Locution of the eldest star, and pack
The conscience naveled in the plunging wind,
Umbilical to call—and straightway die!
O caught like pennies beneath soot and steam,
Kiss of our agony thou gatherest;
Condensed, thou takest all—shrill ganglia
Impassioned with some song we fail to keep.
And yet, like Lazarus, to feel the slope,
The sod and billow breaking—lifting ground,
—A sound of waters bending astride the sky
Unceasing with some word that will not die!

. . . . . .

A tugboat, wheezing wreaths of steam,
Lunged past, with one galvanic blare stove up the river.
I counted the echoes assembling, one after one,
Searching, thumbing the midnight on the piers.
Lights, coasting left the oily tympanum of waters;
The blackness somewhere gouged glass on a sky.

And this thy harbor, O my City, I have driven under,
Tossed from the coil of ticking towers . . . Tomorrow,
And to be . . . Here by the River that is East—
Here at the waters' edge the hands drop memory;
Shadowless in that abyss they unaccounting lie.
How far away the star has pooled the sea—
Or shall the hands be drawn away, to die?

Kiss of our agony Thou gatherest,
O Hand of Fire
gatherest—

VOYAGES

Where icy and bright dungeons lift
Of swimmers their lost morning eyes,
And ocean rivers, churning, shift
Green borders under stranger skies,

Steadily as a shell secretes
Its beating leagues of monotone,
Or as many waters trough the sun's
Red kelson past the cape's wet stone;

O rivers mingling toward the sky
And harbor of the phoenix' breast—
My eyes pressed black against the prow,
—Thy derelict and blinded guest

Waiting, afire, what name, unspoke,
I cannot claim: let thy waves rear
More savage than the death of kings,
Some splintered garland for the seer.

Beyond siroccos harvesting
The solstice thunders, crept away,
Like a cliff swinging or a sail
Flung into April's inmost day—

Creation's blithe and petaled word
To the lounged goddess when she rose
Conceding dialogue with eyes
That smile unsearchable repose—

Still fervid covenant, Belle Isle,
—Unfolded floating dais before
Which rainbows twine continual hair—
Belle Isle, white echo of the oar!

The imaged word, it is, that holds
Hushed willows anchored in its glow.
It is the unbetrayable reply
Whose accent no farewell can know.

THE AIR PLANT

(*Grand Cayman, W. I.*)

This tuft that thrives on saline nothingness,
Inverted octopus with heavenward arms
Thrust parching from a palm-bole hard by the cove—
A bird almost—of almost bird alarms,

Is pulmonary to the wind that jars
Its tentacles, horrific in their lurch.
The lizard's throat, held bloated for a fly,
Balloons but warily from this throbbing perch.

The needles and hacksaws of cactus bleed
A milk of earth when stricken off the stalk;
But this—defenseless, thornless, sheds no blood,
Scarce shadow even—but the air's thin talk.

Angelic Dynamo! Ventriloquist of the Blue!
While beachward creeps the shark-swept Spanish Main.
By what conjunctions do the winds appoint
Its apotheosis, at last—the hurricane!

Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. He was brought up in cities in the Middle West, was graduated from Central High School in Cleveland and at eighteen became a teacher of English in Mexico, where he lived for a year and a half. He spent a year at Columbia University and some time as a worker on the high seas. Hughes' next move was a foreign hegira, going to Paris in midwinter with seven dollars in his pocket. He stayed in France ten months, worked his way through Italy and Spain, and returned to New York with twenty-five cents. Working as a busboy in Washington, he was discovered by Vachel Lindsay, who read several of his poems to a fashionable audience in the very hotel in which Hughes carried trays of dishes. This incident attracted the attention of the press of the country, and people who never would have glanced at the poetry for its own sake became interested in the career of so strange a singer.

The Weary Blues, Hughes' first volume, appeared in January, 1926. One of the poems had already won first prize in a contest conducted by *Opportunity*, a magazine which did great service in fostering creative work by negroes. Hughes' poetry appearing at the same time as Countée Cullen's justified those who claimed we were witnessing a revival of Negro art. Among the whites, Eugene O'Neill, Waldo Frank, Sherwood Anderson and Carl Van Vechten had already shown the significance of the Negro in literature. The Negroes themselves began to prove the quality of their inheritance. Johnson's *The Book of American Negro Poetry* appeared, three collections of American Negro spirituals disclosed the melodic fertility of the black singers, and various collections of "blues" revealed how greatly contemporary American composers were indebted to the rude rhythms and sobbing saxophones of the dark musicians. Hughes was the first to express the spirit of these blues in words. In his note to his second volume, *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927), he writes, "The *Blues*, unlike the *Spirituals*, have a strict poetic pattern: one long line repeated and a third line to rhyme with the first two. Sometimes the second line in repetition is slightly changed and sometimes, but very seldom, it is omitted. The mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh."

Although at least half of Hughes' work centers about the blues, much of his poetry is grim in an essentially urban manner. His portraits of Negro workmen (as evidenced in the remarkable "Brass Spittoons" with its similarity in symbols to Anna Hempstead Branch's "The Monk in the Kitchen") are more memorable than those produced by any of his compatriots. Beneath the physical struggle one senses the more suffering spirit.

HOMESICK BLUES

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever' time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station;
Ma heart was in ma mouth.
Went down to de station;
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin' for a box car
To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin'
I opens ma mouth an' laughs.

BRASS SPITTOONS

Clean the spittoons, boy.
Detroit,
Chicago,
Atlantic City,
Palm Beach.
Clean the spittoons.
The steam in hotel kitchens,
And the smoke in hotel lobbies,
And the slime in hotel spittoons:
Part of my life.
Hey, boy!
A nickel,
A dime,
A dollar,
Two dollars a day.
Hey, boy!

A nickel,
A dime,
A dollar,
Two dollars
Buys shoes for the baby.
House rent to pay.
Church on Sunday.
My God!

Babies and church
and women and Sunday
all mixed up with dimes and
dollars and clean spittoons
and house rent to pay.
Hey, boy!

A bright bowl of brass is beautiful to the Lord.
Bright polished brass like the cymbals
Of King David's dancers,
Like the wine cups of Solomon.
Hey, boy!
A clean spittoon on the altar of the Lord.
A clean bright spittoon all newly polished,—
At least I can offer that.
Com'mere, boy!

SATURDAY NIGHT

Play it once.
O, play it some more.
Charlie is a gambler
An' Sadie is a whore.
A glass o' whiskey
An' a glass o' gin:
Strut, Mr. Charlie,
Till de dawn comes in.
Pawn yo' gold watch
An' diamond ring.
Git a quart o' licker.
Let's shake dat thing!
Skee-de-dad! De-dad!

Doo-doo-doo!
Won't be nothin' left
When de worms git through.
An' you's a long time
Dead
When you is
Dead, too.
So beat dat drum, boy!
Shout dat song:
Shake 'em up an' shake 'em up
All night long.
Hey! Hey!
Ho . . . Hum!
Do it, Mr. Charlie,
Till de red dawn come.

COUNTÉE CULLEN

Countée Cullen was born in New York City in 1903, the son of the Reverend Frederick A. Cullen. He was educated in the New York public and high schools and New York University, being graduated with the class of 1925. A year later he received his M.A. at Harvard (1926).

When *The Book of American Negro Poetry* was published in 1922, Cullen was still in his 'teens and his few verses were no more unusual than most youthful flights. Had the anthology been collected three years later, a selection from Cullen's work would have been one of its outstanding features. Beginning in 1924, poems by this hitherto unknown Negro began appearing in various magazines; within a year his name had reached the smallest of literary circles.

Color (1925) and *Copper Sun* (1927) suffer not only from the poet's influences but from his own juvenilia. But there is no gainsaying his gift of epigram and the neatness of his execution. Lacking the deep racial quality of Langston Hughes, his is a more literary accomplishment. If his verse is not as black as it might be painted, it is bold in concept and metaphor. "Heritage," which, in spite of reminiscences of Ralph Hodgson and Edna Millay, marks the peak of his first volume, still stands as one of the finest poems produced by an American Negro.

The Ballad of the Brown Girl (1927) appeared in the same year as his comprehensive anthology of Negro verse, *Caroling Dusk*, in which Cullen showed unexpected editorial acumen.

The Black Christ (1930) suffers from the double handicap of formula in style and formula in feeling. Its program is ambitious and promises force; but here is no fire, only fluency. The poet seems to be victimized by his own epithets, and these lack surprise or conviction. As Harry Alan Potamkin wrote, reviewing the preceding volume, "Mr. Cullen has capitalized the fact of race without paying for such capitalization by the exploitation of the material and the essence of race. Once race becomes to him more than capital and its poetic form more than the statement of its fact, he will create, upon what are undoubtedly unusual gifts, poems of import."

SIMON THE CYRENIAN SPEAKS

He never spoke a word to me,
And yet he called my name.
He never gave a sign to see,
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said, "I will not bear
His cross upon my back—
He only seeks to place it there
Because my skin is black."

But He was dying for a dream,
And He was very meek;
And in His eyes there shone a gleam
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;
I did for Christ alone
What all of Rome could not have wrought
With bruise of lash or stone.

THREE EPITAPHS

For My Grandmother

This lovely flower fell to seed.
Work gently, sun and rain—
She held it as her dying creed
That she would grow again.

For a Virgin Lady

For forty years I shunned the lust
Inherent in my clay:
Death only was so amorous
I let him have his way.

A Lady I Know

She thinks that even up in heaven
Her class lies late and snores,
While poor black cherubs rise at seven
To do celestial chores.

HERITAGE

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

So I lie, who all day long
Want no sound except the song
Sung by wild barbaric birds
Goading massive jungle herds,
Juggernauts of flesh that pass
Trampling tall defiant grass
Where young forest lovers lie,
Plighting troth beneath the sky.
So I lie, who always hear,
Though I cram against my ear
Both my thumbs and keep them there,
Great drums throbbing through the air.
So I lie, whose fount of pride,
Dear distress, and joy allied,
Is my somber flesh and skin,
With the dark blood dammed within

Like great pulsing tides of wine
That, I fear, must burst the fine
Channels of the chafing net
Where they surge and foam and fret.

Africa? A book one thumbs
Listlessly, till slumber comes.
Unremembered are her bats
Circling through the night, her cats
Crouching in the river reeds,
Stalking gentle flesh that feeds
By the river brink; no more
Does the bugle-throated roar
Cry that monarch claws have leapt
From the scabbards where they slept.
Silver snakes that once a year
Doff the lovely coats you wear,
Seek no covert in your fear
Lest a mortal eye should see;
What's your nakedness to me?
Here no leprous flowers rear
Fierce corollas in the air;
Here no bodies sleek and wet,
Dripping mingled rain and sweat,
Tread the savage measures of
Jungle boys and girls in love.

What is last year's snow to me,
Last year's anything? The tree
Budding yearly must forget
How its past arose or set—
Bough and blossom, flower, fruit,
Even what shy bird with mute
Wonder at her travail there,
Meekly labored in its hair.
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

So I lie, who find no peace
Night or day, no slight release

From the unremittent beat
Made by cruel padded feet
Walking through my body's street.
Up and down they go, and back,
Treading out a jungle track.
So I lie, who never quite
Safely sleep from rain at night—
I can never rest at all
When the rain begins to fall;
Like a soul gone mad with pain
I must match its weird refrain;
Ever must I twist and squirm,
Writhing like a baited worm,
While its primal measures drip
Through my body, crying, "Strip!
Doff this new exuberance.
Come and dance the Lover's Dance!"
In an old remembered way
Rain works on me night and day.

Quaint, outlandish heathen gods
Black men fashion out of rods,
Clay and brittle bits of stone,
In a likeness of their own,
My conversion came high-priced;
I belong to Jesus Christ,
Preacher of humility;
Heathen gods are naught to me.
Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
So I make an idle boast;
Jesus of the twice-turned cheek,
Lamb of God, although I speak
With my mouth thus, in my heart
Do I play a double part.
Even at Thy glowing altar
Must my heart grow sick and falter,
Wishing He I served were black,
Thinking then it would not lack
Precedent of pain to guide it,
Let who would or might deride it;

Surely then this flesh would know
Yours had borne a kindred woe
Lord, I fashion dark gods, too,
Daring even to give You
Dark despairing features where,
Crowned with dark rebellious hair,
Patience wavers just so much as
Mortal grief compels, while touches
Quick and hot, of anger, rise
To smitten cheek and weary eyes.
Lord, forgive me if my need
Sometimes shapes a human creed.

All day long and all night through,
One thing only must I do:
Quench my pride and cool my blood,
Lest I perish in the flood.
Lest a hidden ember set
Timber that I thought was wet
Burning like the dryest flax,
Melting like the merest wax,
Lest the grave restore its dead.
Not yet has my heart or head
In the least way realized
They and I are civilized.

ROBERTA TEALE SWARTZ

Roberta Teale Swartz was born in Brooklyn, New York, June 9, 1903. She began rhyming as a child, making up verses for her grandfather, who was her first poetic guide and critic. When Miss Swartz went to college, her gift was discovered while a sophomore. As an undergraduate, she won three of the most important prizes offered by various universities, Robert Frost and the present editor being two of the judges who selected her anonymous work from a score of others. Miss Swartz was graduated from Mount Holyoke with the class of 1925 and did post-graduate work at Radcliffe.

Miss Swartz's *Lilliput* (1926) is distinctly lyrical. Her occasional free verse has little charm beyond a certain quirk of intellect. This tricksy turn of thought is at its best in the more regular verses which are seldom without a half-defiant, half-questioning pucker. From this it should not be gathered that Miss

Swartz's Muse is merely light and flippant. There are grave accents throughout, but it is no spectacled seriousness with which she regards the world.

CHLOROPHYL

My mind is as the noise in fall
Of brittle leaves against a wall.
A thousand verdant thoughts that were
Try to repeat the summer stir
And cannot; when the wind shifts by
They shake and rattle, false and dry,
And have no music more at all,
Being but dead leaves on a wall.

O you alone, high, glistening,
Keep the warm lusters of the spring!
(Is there a frost I do not know
That shall take this from me also?)
Still, after every colder night
I find you laughing in the light,
The vine not utterly bereft—
This is the green place that is left.

VIRGINIA MOORE

Virginia Moore was born July 11, 1903, in Harvard, Nebraska. Her childhood was spent in the state of her birth, her girlhood in the South. She was educated at Hollins College, Virginia, from which she took her A.B. in 1922, and did post-graduate work at Columbia University, receiving her M.A. in 1923.

Not Poppy (1926) is a mixture of individuality and influences. The subjects are the author's own, but it is not difficult to trace an indebtedness to Browning, Emily Dickinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay and less significant contemporaries. Though *Not Poppy* relies too much on the manufactured phrase and the coddled epithet, it communicates an intensity and lyrical ease. *Sweet Water and Bitter* (1928) is a distinct advance. Not so mannered as its predecessor, its expression is more direct, its influences are less obvious. Miss Moore's verse is marked by contrasts rather than by coördination. The bright simplicity of "Winter Sunset" is set off by the dark fancy of "Underground Forest," yet both have roots

spreading far into the unseen. There is nothing experimental about this work; Miss Moore disturbs no theory, disrupts no form. But in the best of her poems (notably in the sonnets of which "Take This for Comfort" is typical) there is a search—and sometimes an attainment—in quest of values which are more than technical.

Besides her poetry, Miss Moore has written, with Helen Ferris, a book of interviews, *Girls Who Did* (1927), and a novel, *Rising Wind* (1928).

WINTER SUNSET

Spring underfoot
Alas is dead,
But God has put
Spring overhead.

The field is plowed,
I smell the rose,
As cloud on cloud
The color goes

And in between
The east and west
A grassy green
Is manifest.

And now the hill
Is dark indeed
As vapors fill
The upper mead.

The twilight flows
Beyond the bank
Where shimmering does
So lately drank.

The water grieves,
The air is wet,
I search the leaves
For violet.

UNDERGROUND FOREST

You who love darkness, I have found a forest
Under the ground, and numberless and mute,
Where every massive trunk that plunders downward
Is blind in all its eyes, being a root,
And many seasons pass in sable splendor
Without a leaf, without a ripening fruit.

Here is a deadly twilight. Let no mortal
Be lost in lusterless regions and behold
As pale, as stygian as an evil conscience,
The stiffened-out inhabitants of mold,
Lest one of them should learn in gruesome manner
Why dew and all its counterparts are cold.

Never a bird . . . only a creeping stillness
As windless as the garments of a ghoul,
And nothing, nothing on its haunches howling
For very fear; and when the night is cool,
No stag approaching with majestic headgear
To drink the jeweled waters of the pool.

If it were possible, the downward forest
Would clamber for its own, the souls that brood;
The darkling mole, secure within his mansion,
Precedes—the rest would follow if they could:
Lovers distraught would gather there, bemoaning,
With arms upheld in frozen attitude.

"TAKE THIS FOR COMFORT"

Take this for comfort, desperate of heart,
Use it for ointment on the wounds you bear;
There never was a mortal set apart
From the destiny of grief that mortals share.
But grief is doled only to be redeemed
On the brown breast of nature, rich with wreck:
The claims of earth are desperations dreamed,
Mortality the stone about your neck.

Here is a pillow fit for any mood,
Hard with affection, fringed with kindly grass;
No man can give you this effacing good
Though he be precious as the years that pass. . . .
Birds come, winds come, and women asking rest—
There is no breast to ease you like this breast.

MERRILL MOORE

Merrill Moore was born in Columbia, Tennessee, September 11, 1903. Although he served an interneship in Boston, his backgrounds are entirely Southern: his father, John Trotwood Moore, the historian, was from Alabama; his mother from Missouri. He was educated in Nashville, receiving his B.A. at Vandberbilt University in 1924, his M.D. in 1928, and he was one of the group which made *The Fugitive* so provocative a periodical.

His work is vividly modern and it seems, at first glance, a paradox that this experimental poet has chosen the most classic form as his medium. Typography and tradition notwithstanding, *The Noise That Time Makes* (1929) is composed entirely of sonnets—and it is an open secret that Merrill Moore at the age of twenty-five had composed no less than two thousand such sonnets. Nor is it a fiction that Moore learned shorthand in order to get more of his fourteen-liners done between classroom and laboratory. It should be said that neither Wyatt nor Philip Sidney would have sponsored had they even recognized Moore's employment of the key with which Shakespeare unlocked his art. *The Noise That Time Makes* bears the first fruits of what might be considered a new hybrid: the American sonnet.

The characterization is not far-fetched, for Moore's cis-Atlantic accent, the native syncopated speed—so different from English and Italian tempi—the abrupt approach and swift abandonment are not only occasioned by local backgrounds but are the very essence of these poems. As a sonneteer in the strict sense, Moore commits every known heresy and invents several new ones. His rhyme-schemes seem as haphazard as they are numerous—the rhymes themselves are suspiciously unorthodox. His lines, instead of conforming to a precise meter, stretch themselves flexibly as their author throws in four or five extra syllables with prodigal nonchalance. His stanzas, instead of splitting neatly into customary octave and sestet, divide themselves anywhere with what seems sheer perversity. But there is nothing arbitrary about these "American sonnets." The innovations are essentially reasonable, and the reasons for them are quite simple. Merrill Moore's sonnets are,

in some ways, the most spontaneous ever written in America, and their "naturalness" is reflected in their structure. The rhythms are based on the rise and fall of the breath rather than on the beat of the metronome. It is not scansion but stress which determines the line-length. The ideas in each sonnet—the shift of emphasis, the coupling of rhymes, the internal appositions—are responsible for the strange but always logical departures in spacing. Sometimes the author adds a title which, included in the rhyme-scheme, is actually a part of the poem (*vide* "Old Men and Old Women Going Home on the Street Car" or "Helen Told Me What Was in Her Head"), and so calmly manufactures a fifteen-line sonnet.

The charm of such poetry is the continual freshness, which gives it the quality of improvisation. This is, likewise, a danger; for when Moore, seated before his instrument, lets his fingers wander as they list, his spontaneous playing extends itself into a fluency which is neither a virtue nor virtuosity. But the best of his lines reveal the serious eye and sensitive touch. "What if small birds are peppering the sky," "allowing fish-like thoughts to escape in thin streams trickling through the mind," "birds indeclinable twitter"—the sonnets are full of such swift exactitudes. Suiting their pace to subjects limited only by a seemingly unlimited imagination, scarcely two of these poems are alike in shape or theme. "Shot Who? Jim Lane!" is as realistic as it is sectional; "Warning to One" is a tribute etched with acid; "How She Resolved to Act" is intuitive as it is whimsical; "The Book of How" quietly mingles the casual and the colossal. *The Noise That Time Makes* presents, with kaleidoscopic change, no sequence but a series of unrelated patterns impacting on each other. This, obviously, is a poetry not of association but disassociation; it is explosive not integrative. But it has its own positive quality. Merrill Moore derives from no one; he has that "tone of voice" which is the personal and unmistakable property of the poet.

OLD MEN AND OLD WOMEN GOING HOME ON THE STREET CAR

Carrying their packages of groceries in particular
With books under their arms that maybe they will read
And possibly understand, old women lead
Their weaker selves up to the front of the car.

And old men who for thirty years have sat at desks
Survey them harmlessly.
They regard each other
As forgotten sister looks at forgotten brother

On their way between two easily remembered tasks
And that is positively all there is to it.

But it was not that way thirty years ago!
Before desks and counters had tired their backs and feet,

When life for them was a bowl of odorous fruit
That they might take their pick of, then turn and go
Saying, "This tastes so good!" or, "This smells so sweet!"

IT IS WINTER, I KNOW

What if small birds are peppering the sky,
Scudding south with the clouds to an ultimate tip on lands
Where they may peck worms and slugs from moist sands
Rather muddily mixed with salt?
Or if wind dashes by
Insufferably filled with birds' indeclinable twitter
Not deigning to toy with the oak-twigs that it passes
And treading but lightly on all the delicate grasses
Under trees where crickets are silent, where mad leaves flutter?

It is winter, I know, there are too many Nays now confronting
The obdurate soul that would trick itself into believing
That buds are still ripe, that cells are all ready for cleaving;
It can only be winter, winter alone, when blunting
Winds rush over the ice, scattering leaves from their weeds
To rattle the sycamore tree's dry-shriveled seeds.

SHOT WHO? JIM LANE!

When he was shot he toppled to the ground
As if the toughened posts that were his thighs
Had felt that all that held them up were lies,
Weak lies, that suddenly some one had found
Out all that was true about them.
It did not seem
Like the crashing of a stalwart forest oak
But like a frail staff that a sharp wind broke
Or something insubstantial in a dream.

I never thought Jim Lane would fall like that.

He'd sworn that bullets must be gold to find him;
That when they came toward him he made them mind him
By means he knew,
just as a barn-yard cat
Can keep a pack of leaping dogs at bay
By concentrating and looking a certain way.

WARNING TO ONE

Death is the strongest of all living things
And when it happens do not look in the eyes
For a dead fire or a lack-luster there,
But listen for the words that fall from lips
Or do not fall. Silence is not death;
It merely means that the one who is conserving breath
Is not concerned with tattle and small quips.

Watch the quick fingers and the way they move
During unguarded moments—words of love
And love's caresses may be cold as ice
And cold the glitter of engagement rings;
Death is the sword that hangs on a single hair,
And that thin tenuous hair is no more than love
And yours is the silly head it hangs above.

HOW SHE RESOLVED TO ACT

"I shall be careful to say nothing at all
About myself or what I know of him
Or the vaguest thought I have—no matter how dim,
Tonight if it so happen that he call."

And not ten minutes later the door-bell rang
And into the hall he stepped as he always did
With a face and a bearing that quite poorly hid
His brain that burned and his heart that fairly sang
And his tongue that wanted to be rid of the truth.

As well as she could, for she was very loath
To signify how she felt, she kept very still,
But soon her heart cracked loud as a coffee mill

And her brain swung like a comet in the dark
And her tongue raced like a squirrel in the park.

PANDORA AND THE MOON

Minds awake in bodies that were asleep
Caused the winged troubles to be born
That made Pandora one time feel forlorn,

Because, in spite of the box, she could not keep
Her troubles there, the worrisome animalcules
Fluttered out never to be regained,
For every method of evil especially trained
And subject neither to God's nor the devil's rules.

What shall she do? Nothing; sit and ponder,
Watch the dying leaves drop from the tree
Until they all are gone and she may see
The same moon then that used to make her wonder
At the unbelievable stories she sits and reads.

And if she succeeds in that then she succeeds.

VILLAGE NOON: MID-DAY BELLS

When both hands of the town clock stood at twelve
Eve ceased spinning, Adam ceased to delve.

A lusty cockerel crowed that noon had come,
The shadows stood beneath the trees and some
Were motionless a moment—then the people
Busied themselves for food, and in the steeple
Ubiquitous pigeons roucoulayed and slept
Above the watch the dogs below them kept
For nothing—or a dust cloud down the road
That might mean feet or might mean wheels or not.

Then as the noon sun with its ardor glowed
On man and beast and field and dwelling place
The hands moved past noon to another spot
And Time moved on a little way in Space.

THE BOOK OF HOW

After the stars were all hung separately out
For mortal eyes to see that care to look
The one who did it sat down and wrote a book
On how he did it.
It took him about
As long to write the book as to do the deed
But he said, "It's things like this we mostly need."
And the angels approved but the devils screamed with laughter
For they knew exactly what would follow after.

For somehow he managed entirely to omit
The most important facts in accomplishing it,

Where he got the ladder to reach the stars
And how he lighted them, especially Mars,

And what he hung them on when he got them there
Eternally distant and luminous in the air.

AND TO THE YOUNG MEN

And to the young men awaiting their sacrifice
You brought water in an invisible pail
And promised them the plans would surely fail
That were written against them, recorded in the stars.
And you brought straw and padded the cold bars
Of the prison beds whereon the young men lay,
And sung to some at night and fanned by day
Those who were fevering into paradise.

But even then you did not do enough.
For you remember a boy, the silent one?
With a silent eye, who scarcely loved the sun,
And felt too keenly the winter wind's dry sough?
Well, you should have brought him cresses from a far stream
Over which nymphs and under which naiads dream.

Robert Penn Warren was born in Kentucky in 1905. His education was widely scattered: he received his B.A. at Vanderbilt University and his M.A. at the University of California. He attended Yale Graduate School for a time and, in 1929, New College, at Oxford, reading English literature. He was the youngest of *The Fugitive* group, sharing their sectional differences, though less pronouncedly local than most.

John Brown (1929) is a biography in prose, differing radically in tone and treatment from Benét's *John Brown's Body*. Warren's poetry is more certain; it has iron beneath its grace. Intellectual in its origins, Warren's verse remains closer to his locale than the work of his confrères; fertile in strong images, its strength no less than its fecundity rises from Kentucky soil. The critical mind is always at work here, but not so insistently as to inhibit the creative imagination. In his early twenties, Warren has already accomplished a fusion: in his lime-tinctured phrases, form and feeling are one.

Pondy Woods and Other Poems (1930) is a first volume of verse which expresses the quiet patriot and confirms the poet.

PONDY WOODS

The buzzards over Pondy Woods
Achieve the blue tense altitudes,
Black figments that the woods release,
Obscenity in form and grace,
Drifting high through the pure sunshine
Till the sun in gold decline.

Big Jim Todd was a slick black buck
Laying low in the mud and muck
Of Pondy Woods when the sun went down
In gold, and the buzzards tilted down
A windless vortex to the black-gum trees
To sit along the quiet boughs,
Devout and swollen, at their ease.

By the buzzard roost Big Jim Todd
Listened for hoofs on the corduroy road
Or for the foul and sucking sound
A man's foot makes on the marshy ground.

Past midnight, when the moccasin
Slipped from the log and, trailing in
Its obscured waters, broke
The dark algae, one lean bird spoke.

"Nigger, you went this afternoon
For your Saturday spree at the Blue Goose saloon,
So you've got on your Sunday clothes,
On your big splay feet got patent-leather shoes.
But a buzzard can smell the thing you've done;
The posse will get you—run, nigger, run—
There's a fellow behind you with a big shot-gun.
Nigger, nigger, you'll sweat cold sweat
In your patent-leather shoes and Sunday clothes
When down your track the steeljacket goes
Mean and whimpering over the wheat.

"Nigger, your breed ain't metaphysical."
The buzzard coughed. His words fell
In the darkness, mystic and ambrosial.
"But we maintain our ancient rite,
Eat gods by day and prophesy by night.
We swing against the sky and wait;
You seize the hour, more passionate
Than strong, and strive with time to die—
With Time, the beaked tribe's astute ally.

"The Jew-boy died. The Syrian vulture swung
Remotely above the cross whereon he hung
From dinner-time to supper-time, and all
The people gathered there watched him until
The lean brown chest no longer stirred,
Then idly watched the slow majestic bird
That in the last sun above the twilit hill
Gleamed for a moment at the height and slid
Down the hot wind and in the darkness hid.
Nigger, regard the circumstance of breath:
'Non omnis moriar,' the poet saith."

Pedantic, the bird clacked its gray beak,
With a Tennessee accent to the classic phrase;
Jim understood, and was about to speak,
But the buzzard drooped one wing and filmed the eyes.

At dawn unto the Sabbath wheat he came,
That gave to the dew its faithless yellow flame
From kindly loam in recollection of
The fires that in the brutal rock once strove.
To the ripe wheat fields he came at dawn.
Northward the printed smoke stood quiet above
The distant cabins of Squiggtown.
A train's far whistle blew and drifted away
Coldly; lucid and thin the morning lay
Along the farms, and here no sound
Touched the sweet earth miraculously stilled.
Then down the damp and sudden wood there belled
The musical white-throated hound.

In Pondy Woods in the August drouth
Lurks fever and the cottonmouth.
And buzzards over Pondy Woods
Achieve the blue tense altitudes,
Drifting high in the pure sunshine
Till the sun in gold decline;
Then golden and hieratic through
The night their eyes burn two by two.

PRO SUA VITA

Nine months I waited in the dark beneath
Her tired heart for this precious breath,

And month by month since I left her breast
Her breath and blood I have given in waste,

Till now at length some peace she has got
That her breath and blood in me have not.

In the strictured nights of glimmering snow
The blood drives quick though breath is slow,

And through the August afternoon
Flees the breath faintly but too soon.

So blood is lost to the brutal gardens
Where the iron petal of dark frost hardens,

And breath, when the storm-black trees bowed under,
Waited the fanged astounding thunder.

Shall I say to my father then
Among the belted best of men:

"Fellow, you tupped her years ago
That tonight my boots might crunch the snow.

"And woman, you show your son to wait
Till the breath and distraught blood abate;

"As my father began the tale of waste
When the sullen head slept on your breast,

"So the rigid hills had been forgot
In darkness, if God had wasted not."

LETTER OF A MOTHER

Under the green lamp-light her letter there
Lies among cluttered papers, rusted pens,
Books and handkerchiefs, tobacco tins.
Shuffle of feet ascends the darkened stair.

The son, defined upon the superscription,
Inherits now his cubicled domain,
And reads. Indeed, should he possess again
The loneliness of time's slow mitigation?

Or spell the name, which is himself, and say:
"By now this woman's milk is out of me.
I have a debt of flesh, assuredly,
Which score the mintage of the breath might pay. . . .

"A certain weight of cunning flesh devised
So hunger is bred in the bitter bone
To cleave about this precious skeleton
Held mortmain of her womb and merchandised

"Unto the dark: a subtile engine, propped
In the sutured head beneath the coronal seam,
Whose illegal prodigality of dream
In shaking the escheat heart is quick estopped.

"Such is the substance of this legacy:
A fragile vision fed of acrid blood,
Whose sweet process may bloom in gratitude
For the worthier gift of her mortality."

But still the flesh cries out unto the black
Void, across the plains insistently
Where rivers wash their wastage to the sea. . . .
The mother flesh that cannot summon back

The tired child it would again possess
As shall a womb more tender than her own
That builds not tissue or the little bone,
But dissolves them to itself in weariness.

HISTORY AMONG THE ROCKS

(*From "Kentucky Mountain Farm"*)

There are many ways to die
Here among the rocks in any weather:
Wind, down the eastern gap, will lie
Level along the snow, beating the cedar,
And lull the drowsy head that it blows over
To startle a crystalline, cold dream forever.

The hound's black paw will print the grass in May,
And sycamores rise down a dark ravine,
Where a creek in flood, sucking the rock and clay,
Will tumble the sycamore, the laurel, away.
Think how a body, naked and lean
And white as the splintered sycamore, would go
Tumbling and turning, hushed in the end,
With hair afloat in waters that gently bend
To ocean where the blind tides flow.

Under the shadow of ripe wheat,
By flat limestone, will coil the copperhead,
Fanged as the sunlight, hearing the reaper's feet.
But there are other ways, the lean men said:
In these autumn orchards once young men lay dead—
Gray coats, blue coats. Young men on the mountainside

Clambered, fought. Heels muddied the rocky spring.
Their reason is hard to guess, remembering
Blood on their black mustaches in moonlight,
Cold musket-barrels glittering with frost.
Their reason is hard to guess and a long time past;
The apple falls, falling in the quiet night.

GEORGE DILLON

George Dillon was born November 12, 1906, in Jacksonville, Florida, and spent most of his childhood in Kentucky, his mother's region. He went to school in the Middle West and was graduated from the University of Chicago in 1927.

While still an undergraduate, his verses began to attract attention beyond the borders of Illinois; he was made president of the Poetry Club of his University, and in 1925 was given the John Billings Fiske Prize as well as the Young Poet's Prize awarded by *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. In the same year he joined the *Poetry* staff as Associate Editor.

Boy in the Wind (1927) is distinguished by much more than precocity; always musical, there is an edge to these water-color contours. Dillon is essentially a lyricist of half-tones, but he puts suavity to measures firm in outline.

The Flowering Stone, Dillon's second volume, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. Here the poetry is less insistently dulcet. Maturity begins to underline his soft lights with shadows. But Dillon does not fall into a poeticized "daybreak of anguish"; he still declares for "the noble wave, the affluent wind." His is an early but pronounced gift of song.

IN TWO MONTHS NOW

In two months now or maybe one
The sun will be a different sun
And earth that stretches white as straw
With stony ice will crack and thaw
And run in whistling streams and curve
In still blue-shadowed pools. The nerve
Of each pink root will quiver bare
And orchards in the April air
Will show black branches breaking white.
Red roses in the green twilight

Will glimmer ghostly blue and swell
Upon their vines with such a smell
As only floats when the breeze is loud
At dusk from roses in a crowd.
I know that there will be these things
Remembering them from other springs.
All these and more shall soon be seen,
As beautiful as they have been;
But not so beautiful as they
Seem now to be, a month away.

BOY IN THE WIND

How came this troubled one to stray
With fire and song in the wind's way?

Indifferent and dumb and sweet,
The seasons fall about his feet.

Frail flames are set behind his eyes,
And under his ribs his heart makes moan
Like a pent bird who throbs and dies.

He walks in the windy night alone.

And who would know if he should sing
Whose song is less than the murmuring
Of the wind full of the ruin of spring?

And who could say if he had flown
Like a flame blown out or a bird up-blown?

Or if his heart cries out in pain
Who hears the cry through wind and rain?

He wanders east. He wanders west.

Where will he ever come to rest,
With that fire blowing in his brain,
And that bird grieving in his breast?

APRIL'S AMAZING MEANING

April's amazing meaning doubtless lies
In tall hoarse boys and slips
Of slender girls with suddenly wider eyes
And parted lips;

For girls will wander pensive in the spring
When the green rain is over,
Doing some slow, inconsequential thing,
Plucking clover;

And any boy alone upon a bench
When his work's done will sit
And stare at the black ground and break a branch
And whittle it

Slowly; and boys and girls, irresolute,
Will curse the dreamy weather
Until they meet past the pale hedge and put
Their lips together.

MEMORY OF LAKE SUPERIOR

I know a country of bright anonymous beaches
Where the sand may sleep unprinted till it is stone.
Granite grows loud among the hills and ditches
Of the blown water when the water is blown.

Up on the mountain the sky is everywhere,
The lake fallen hugely underfoot as if
Into the bottom of a well of air,
The island upon it little as a leaf.

The woods are dark with the rank lace of hemlock and pine,
Beech, birch, and balsam, and the shadow of these.
There are mushrooms, and thimbleberries sweeter than wine,
And a far noise of wind in the tops of the trees.

That country was all the knowledge I shall ever learn;
It was all the wisdom I shall ever have.
It was there I looked for the driftwood boughs that burn
In colors like the memory of a wave.

It was there I looked along the forest floor
For the gray feather of the grouse's wing.
It was there I learned to look for nothing more,
Looking into the sea-blue eyes of spring.

ONE BEAUTY STILL

One beauty still is faultless, not
Deflowered in the bed of thought:
It is a sound of sunken seas.
It is an avid wish for ease.
It is the earth, it is the sky
When passion is a lute put by,
And life a dancer out of breath.
It is the lovely face of death,
Adored and guessed at—never once
Beheld in chrysoprase or bronze;
Not in the temple or the grove,
Not in a hundred nights of love.

This was the morning sun, the wild
Daybreak of anguish in the child.
This is the sun at noon no less,
Deep in the dome of nothingness.
Wherefore, impoverished heart, be proud
To wear the purple of the shroud:
If you are friendless, take for friend
The noble wave, the affluent wind.
If you are homeless, do not care:
Inhabit the bright house of air.
If you are worn with wayfaring,
Lie down within the arms of spring.

HILDA CONKLING

Hilda Conkling was born at Catskill-on-Hudson, New York, October 8, 1910. The daughter of Grace Hazard Conkling (see page 311), she came to Northampton, Massachusetts, with her mother when she was three years old and has lived there since.

Hilda began to write poems—or rather, to talk them—at the age of four. She has created more than two hundred little verses, many of them astonishing in exactness of phrase. Hilda "told"

her poems, and her mother copied them down, arranged the line-divisions and read it to the child for correction. Conceding a half-conscious shaping by Mrs. Conkling, the quality which shines behind all of Hilda's facets of loveliness is a straightforward ingeniousness, a child-like but extraordinary fantasy.

Poems by a Little Girl (1920), published when Hilda was a little more than nine years old, is proof of this. Every poem bears its stamp of unaffected originality; "Water," "Hay-Cock," and a dozen others are startling in their precision and power of painting the familiar in unsuspected colors. This child not only sees, feels and hears with the concentration of a child-artist, she communicates the results of her perceptions with the sensitivity of an expert craftsman. She hears a chickadee talking

> The way smooth bright pebbles
> Drop into water.

Everything is vivid and sharply correct to her keen sight. The rooster's comb is "gay as a parade"; he has "pearl trinkets on his feet" and

> The short feathers smooth along his back
> Are the dark color of wet rocks,
> Or the rippled green of ships
> When I look at their sides through water.

Shoes of the Wind (1922) shows that her first volume was no mere *Wunderkind's* freak. Here again her vision is precise even when her imagination is most playful. She watches pigeons with "feet the color of new June strawberries," she observes a pink peony standing in a tall glass as "Queen Elizabeth in a ruff," lilies-of-the-valley are "bell-shaped moments clustered, doves of time." This clarity of epithet makes Hilda kin to the Imagists; Amy Lowell might have described a flight of pigeons in just such words as Hilda's: "A cool curving and sliding down the light."

WATER

> The world turns softly
> Not to spill its lakes and rivers.
> The water is held in its arms
> And the sky is held in the water.
> What is water,
> That pours silver,
> And can hold the sky?

HAY-COCK

This is another kind of sweetness
Shaped like a bee-hive:
This is the hive the bees have left,
It is from this clover-heap
They took away the honey
For the other hive!

THE OLD BRIDGE

The old bridge has a wrinkled face.
He bends his back
For us to go over.
He moans and weeps
But we do not hear.
Sorrow stands in his face
For the heavy weight and worry
Of people passing.
The trees drop their leaves into the water;
The sky nods to him.
The leaves float down like small ships
On the blue surface
Which is the sky.
He is not always sad:
He smiles to see the ships go down
And the little children
Playing on the river banks.

I KEEP WONDERING

I saw a mountain,
And he was like Wotan looking at himself in the water.
I saw a cockatoo,
And he was like sunset clouds.
Even leaves and little stones
Are different to my eyes sometimes.
I keep wondering through and through my heart
Where all the beautiful things in the world
Come from.
And while I wonder
They go on being beautiful.

Nathalia Clara Ruth Crane, the most remarkable phenomenon since the days of Marjorie Fleming, was born in New York City August 11, 1913. Through her father she is descended from John and Priscilla Alden, Stephen Crane being a not distant kinsman; on her mother's side she inherits the varied gifts of the Abarbanels, that famous family of Spanish Jews which counts among its members poets, musicians and ministers of state.

Nathalia began to write when she was little more than eight years old. At the age of nine she sent some of her verses to *The New York Sun* and they were accepted wholly on their merit by Edmund Leamy, the poetry editor, Leamy having no idea that the lines were written by a child. Other verses of Nathalia's appeared in *The Sun* and it was not until a call in answer to a letter disclosed to Leamy's amazement that the writer was none other than a slender, candid and not at all self-conscious child.

Nathalia's first volume, *The Janitor's Boy*, appeared when its author was ten and a half, in 1924. It went rapidly through six editions, being one of the most discussed publications of the year. Some of the critics explained the work by insisting that the child was some sort of medium, an instrument unaware of what was played upon it; others, considering the book a hoax, scorned the fact that any child could have written verses so smooth in execution and so remarkable in spiritual overtones. Whatever the source may be, whether the inspiration derives from Nathalia's father or some atavistic spark, the poetry speaks for itself, a firm and definite accomplishment.

The verse is sharply divided into two kinds: the light and childish jingle—the sort of thinking native to most children but which most of them are unable to compress into such facile rhyme—and the grave and cryptic poetry. Even in the first division there is a quality unusual to child verse; in such merry stanzas as "The Flathouse Roof," "Love," "Oh, Roger Jones" there is a sophistication which lifts them above many of Eugene Field's rhymes on similar themes. The turn of epigram is never lacking; even in her pattering syllables she speaks of "the tenseness of humiliating pain"; a visit to an ice-cream store leads her to conclude that she "could not stain romance with monetary fee"; an emotion suspiciously like humor leads her to write "The First Reformer" and to begin another poem:

> I linger on the flathouse roof, the moonlight is divine,
> But my heart is all a-flutter like the washing on the line.

The other division of Nathalia's work, which is no longer verse but indubitable poetry, reveals the fact that Nathalia has read

much not only in books of legends but in the dictionary. This juvenile mystic is as fond of archaic terms as Francis Thompson (she collects unusual words as other children postage stamps) and she enjoys using a string of glistening alliterations to express some psychic fact. But the fact rises from its foundations on an imaginative sweep which any poet might envy. The thought of heavenly spirits hankering for the world they have left assumes this form:

A precious place is Paradise and none may know its worth,
But Eden ever longeth for the knicknacks of the earth.

The angels grow quite wistful over worldly things below;
They hear the hurdy-gurdies in the Candle Maker's Row.

They listen for the laughter from the attics of the earth;
They lower pails from heaven's wall to catch the milkmaid's mirth.

Figures startling as the last one abound in Nathalia's pages. She summons "birth-marked butterflies cruising across the mirrors of the skies"; she sends the humming-bird "pivoting on emptiness"; her *alter ego* in Gobi sees "the tombs Time left unlatched" and "wind-blown shrouds of sand"; she imagines Oriental bees sailing "in golden convoys to the mountains of the moon." She writes a poem to console a blind playmate to whom she has tried to picture the wonder of a Christmas tree. But the lines which result have little to do with the child and nothing with the actual event; what follows is a piece of musical philosophy in which the insight is nothing less than uncanny. "The Vestal" and "Destiny" are illuminations which would not be out of place in a volume of Emily Dickinson. It is a younger feminine Swinburne who speaks in "The Gossips." And from what origin sprang that curiously involved but amazing monologue, "My Husbands," with its occult divination:

He showed me like a master
That one rose makes a gown;
That looking up to Heaven
Is merely looking down.

Other volumes followed in incredibly swift succession. *Lava Lane* (1925), *The Singing Crow* (1926), *Venus Invisible* (1928), three volumes of poetry much more sedate than her first book. Prose paralleled her verse almost as swiftly: *The Sunken Garden* (1926) showed her rather pompous genius in a long alliterative account of the Children's Crusade; *An Alien from Heaven* (1929) is a novel on a still more unusual theme in which the symbolism

is seemingly autobiographical if suspiciously mature and even dry in tone.

Venus Invisible is the most rewarding of these "later" volumes. It continues her eccentric vocabulary which, though less weird than before, is still more than strange, and a journalistic tendency that causes her to fashion lyrics out of a current fad in psychology or an item in a newspaper. Thus the achievement of Lindbergh—celebrated in "The Wings of Lead," which won first prize in a contest for versifying the flight across the Atlantic—brings in Homer, David, Richard, Joan, Ephesian Diana, Indra, "the stony wings of Egypt," "the tambourine of Miriam." To her defects one might add Nathalia's dependence on roses were it not that some of her finest verse uplifts the flower-cliché. Such an unaccountably metaphysical poem as the "Song" beginning "Great is the rose" passes beyond criticism. One ceases to question whether the author is a conscious child or an influenced medium; one forgets who may have written the phrases and listens only to the long implication which "challenges the crypt, and quotes millenniums against the grave." "The Dust" reiterates the theme; condensations like "The Colors," and "Desire," with its recognition of the province of poetry, are distilled communications. They reach beyond cavil or controversy. The appeal of such lines is not that they have been written by a child but by a poet.

THE BLIND GIRL

In the darkness, who would answer for the color of a rose,
Or the vestments of the May moth and the pilgrimage it goes.

In the darkness who would answer, in the darkness who would
care,
If the odor of the roses and the wingèd things were there.

In the darkness who would cavil o'er the question of a line,
Since the darkness holds all loveliness beyond the mere design.

Oh, night, thy soothing prophecies companion all our ways,
Until releasing hands let fall the catalogue of days.

In the darkness, who would answer for the color of a rose,
Or the vestments of the May moth and the pilgrimage it goes?

In the darkness who would answer, in the darkness who would
care,
If the odor of the roses and the wingèd things were there.

THE VESTAL

Once a pallid vestal
  Doubted truth in blue;
Listed red as ruin,
  Harried every hue;

Barricaded vision,
  Garbed herself in sighs;
Ridiculed the birth marks
  Of the butterflies.

Dormant and disdainful,
  Never could she see
Why the golden powder
  Decorates the bee;

Why a summer pasture
  Lends itself to paint;
Why love unappareled
  Still remains the saint.

Finally she faltered;
  Saw at last, forsooth,
Every gaudy color
  Is a bit of truth.

Then the gates were opened;
  Miracles were seen;
That instructed damsel
  Donned a gown of green;

Wore it in a churchyard,
  All arrayed with care;
And a painted rainbow
  Shone above her there.

THE GOSSIPS

The rosebud that grew by the settle
  Bowed low to the gossiping thrusts;
The poet was praising the nettle,
  The nettle that nobody trusts.

The pansies were painted in postures,
The poppies have stood on their toes;
But long before mention of Moses
Her rivals have flouted the rose.

Oh! Sweetness a-sway by the settle,
Be still on thy beautiful stem;
For love never clung to the nettle—
The nettle that burns to condemn.

Grieve not for a moment's defection,
Though pansies and poppies may pose,
For after a bit of reflection
The rover returns to the rose.

THE FIRST REFORMER

It was a primal twilight tense,
Heat swathed the steaming downs,
And suddenly a flower cried:
"Oh, let's take off our gowns."

No arrogance of modesty—
The time was all too hot;
The sap was pouring from the trees,
The pools began to clot;

A passionate poinsettia stripped
Herself of sarcenet green,
A lily shook her sindon off,
A rose her gabardine.

The honeysuckle cast her sheath,
Strove hard to hide a mole,
The poppy ripped her chemisette
And screamed: "I have a soul!"

Across the downs a humming bird
Came dipping through the bowers;
He pivoted on emptiness
To scrutinize the flowers.

But as he paused to clarify
Amazing visionings,
The perfumes drew him down unto
The loveliest of things.

Bewildered, the poinsettia blushed
And grabbed a bit of grass;
The honeysuckle held her breath,
The poppy sighed, "Alas."

The roses called him renegade,
The lilies shut their eyes.
Down rushed that ruby-throated wretch—
A sultan from the skies.

He wooed the daunted odalisques,
He kissed each downcast nude;
He whispered that an angel's robe
Is mostly attitude;

He sang of love's own liveries,
Of sunburn, tan and verve,
Of little Nordic freckles posed
To punctuate a curve;

He begged them not to gown again,
Caressed away their shame;
He was the first reformer crowned
With accidental fame.

THE THREE-CORNERED LOT

Said the farmer to his daughter: "When I die, as like as not,
I'll leave to you the title to the old three-cornered lot.

" 'Tis the vale beyond the pastures, never any good to me,
With the huckleberry bushes and the silver maple-tree.

"Fair scenery for song birds, but too small to cultivate;
Yet there's a wall around it, like a foolish man's estate."

Fell a blight upon the corn fields; stood an empty barn and cot;
The farmer's holdings dwindled to the old three-cornered lot.

He saw his home dismantled; learned that permanence, alas,
Is the portrait of a swallow painted on the shadow grass.

Came his daughter as a seeress, and she said, "As like as not,
I am giving back the title to the old three-cornered lot.

" 'Tis just a bit of scenery too sweet to cultivate,
Yet there's a wall around it, like a nobleman's estate;

"There are huckleberry bushes and a length of garden loam,
And stone walls of the foolish man wherewith to build a home."

DESTINY

The wind doth wander up and down,
Forever seeking for a crown;
The rose, in stillness on a stem,
Inherits love's own diadem.

THE DUST

Crumpling a pyramid, humbling a rose,
The dust has its reasons wherever it goes.

Treating the sword blade the same as the staff,
Turning the chariot wheel into chaff.

Toppling a pillar and nudging a wall,
Building a sand pile to counter each fall.

Yielding to nothing, not even the rose,
The dust has its reasons wherever it goes.

THE COLORS

You cannot choose your battlefield,
The gods do that for you,
But you can plant a standard
Where a standard never flew.

ALLIANCES

The little *and*, the tiny *if*,
The ardent *ahs* and *ohs*,
They haunt the lanes of poesy,
The boulevards of prose.

Small primpers of the passages
With very slender limbs—
And yet they make alliances
With lordly paradigms.

DESIRE

Oh, I would like to be a ghoul
And ruffle the poet's mound,
To dig up the rhymes he laid aside
For the sake of another sound.

And otherwise, if that were vain,
A diver I would be,
To pick up the rings the doges dropped
Whenever they married the sea.

SONG

(*From "Tadmor"*)

Great is the rose
Infected by the tomb,
Yet burgeoning
Indifferent to death.

Wherein the dawn
Did stumble to fulfill,
The rose has told
In one simplicity

That never life
Relinquishes a bloom
But to bestow
An ancient confidence.

Great is the rose
That challenges the crypt,
And quotes millenniums
Against the grave.

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MODERN BRITISH POETRY

(THIRD REVISED EDITION)

A FOREWORD

To the Third Revised Edition

The third edition of this "critical anthology" has been prepared to meet the demand for a more detailed survey of the period. Practically all the matter included in the earlier editions has been retained and almost as much again has been added. This is true not only of the poetry but of the prose; the bibliographical and critical paragraphs which serve as introductory notes, as well as the more general preface, having been greatly amplified. By moving the calendar back from 1840 to 1830 (for reasons explained in the preface) a wider background is presented and with it the inclusion of Christina Rossetti, T. E. Brown, A. C. Swinburne, Watts-Dunton, William Morris, James Thomson—poets who do not appear in previous editions of this work. By a fortunate circumstance, the date also allows the appearance of such representatives of the Comic Spirit as Lewis Carroll and W. S. Gilbert. Among the more recent writers, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Arthur Waley, T. E. Hulme, Theodore Maynard, Stella Benson, Roy Campbell, Peter Quennell, Richard Hughes and Stephen Spender appear for the first time in these pages. The enlarged format permits the reprinting of longer poems (not in the preceding editions) and a fuller representation of Kipling, Thomas, De la Mare, Hardy, Francis Thompson, Davies, Masefield, Sassoon, Wolfe, the Sitwells and other outstanding figures already included.

It should be stated at the outset that, in spite of its inclusiveness, this compilation is far from a complete summary. No anthology, it might be added in extenuation, can hope to be. Nor should it. The duty of the anthologist (at least as far as one editor sees it) is to whet the reader's appetite, not to satisfy it. Such a collection as this, if its purpose be successful, should stimulate the reader's interest and excite him to a closer inspection of the poet's own volumes. Thus the following pages

pretend to be nothing more than a critical introduction, attempting to chart various movements and tendencies with certain outstanding personalities.

For the greatest help in the preparation of this volume, thanks must be given to most of the living poets represented here. In the majority of instances, they themselves have furnished not only invaluable data but have assisted the editor in the choice of selections, so that this gathering is, to a great extent, a record of their own taste as well as his.

A further acknowledgment must be made to the various publishers whose coöperation has been of such assistance. For permission to reprint the copyright material in this volume, the editor wishes to thank the following firms—his indebtedness being alphabetically acknowledged to:

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PREFACE

It is doubtful whether in all language there is a vaguer adjective than "modern." Definition of the term is demanded at once; further, a date and reason for it. In the case of the present compilation, the subtitle (1830-1930) answers the demand; this preface will attempt to justify the date.

The arbitrary boundary, excluding any poet born prior to 1830, has been chosen for three reasons. First, it rounds out a full century, acting as a companion-collection to the revised *Modern American Poetry*. Second, it starts with Christina Rossetti and T. E. Brown; the former (like Emily Dickinson who leads the American volume) anticipating the flood of lyrical verse by women, the latter foreshadowing the natural speech and colloquial rhythms adopted by succeeding generations. Third, it marks the end of four-square, Victorian conservatism and the beginning of the energetic experimentalism which still engages us.

The great Victorian figures are thus eliminated; reaction takes the place of reflection. Nothing, it has been said, is more permanent than the spirit of change, and we have come a long way since the time when a contemporary poet was seriously praised because he held "the proud honor of never uttering one single line which an English mother once would wish unwritten or an English girl would wish unread." The poet was Tennyson who (in *Idylls of the King*) reduced Malory's Round Table to the board of a royal-family in the best suburban manner, proving that no laureate could have been more appropriate to the era. But if Tennyson, as G. K. Chesterton dryly remarked, "did hold a great many of the same views as Queen Victoria, though he was gifted with a more fortunate literary style," it was his style even more than his views from which his successors revolted. He presented a conventionalized tightness of sentiment; Swinburne offered an equally conventionalized looseness of rhetoric. Taste tired of both. They suggested the extremes which Yeats defined in another connection,

"Sentimentality is deceiving one's self; rhetoric is deceiving other people." Artificial emotions were waning. The twisted inversions, the elaborate diction, the strained periods were doomed.

But I am proceeding too rapidly. Within the larger curve traced in this volume, there are the records of conflicting tendencies. In general—if I may be permitted an arbitrary grouping—these smaller movements may be classified as (1) The end of Victorianism and the growth of a purely decorative art, (2) The Pre-Raphaelites and Swinburne, (3) The rise and decline of the esthetic philosophy, (4) The muscular influence of Henley, (5) The Celtic revival in Ireland, (6) Rudyard Kipling and the ascendancy of mechanism in art, (7) John Masefield and the return of the rhymed narrative, (8) The war and its effects upon the Georgians, (9) The aftermath and the new bucolic poetry, (10) The post-war "literature of nerves." It may be interesting to follow these developments in somewhat closer detail.

THE END OF VICTORIANISM

The age commonly called Victorian came to an end in England about 1880. It was an age distinguished by many true idealists and many false ideals. It was, in spite of its notable artists, on an entirely different level from the epoch preceding. Its poetry was, in the main, not universal but parochial; its romanticism was gilt and tinsel; its realism was kin to its showy glass pendants, red plush, parlor chromos and antimacassars. The period was full of a pessimistic resignation (the note popularized by Fitzgerald's Omar Khayyám) and a kind of negation which, refusing to see any glamour in the present world, turned to the Middle Ages, to King Arthur, to the legend of Troy—to the suave surroundings of a dream-world instead of the hard contours of actual experience.

At its worst, it was a period of smugness, of placid and pious sentimentality—epitomized by the rhymed sermons of Martin Farquhar Tupper, whose *Proverbial Philosophy* was devoured, with all its cloying and indigestible sweetmeats, by tens of thousands. The same tendency is apparent, though far less objectionably, in the moralizing lays of Lord Thomas Macaulay, in the theatrically emotionalized verses of Robert

Buchanan, Edwin Arnold and Sir Lewis Morris—even in the lesser later work of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

The poets of a generation before this time were fired with such ideas as freedom, an awed adoration of nature, an insatiable hunger for truth in all its forms and manifestations. The characteristic poets of the Victorian Era, says Max Plowman, "wrote under the dominance of churchliness, of 'sweetness and light,' and a thousand lesser theories that have not truth but comfort for their end."

The revolt against the tawdriness of the period had already begun; the best of Victorianism can be found not in men who were typically Victorian, but in pioneers like Browning and spirits like Swinburne, Rossetti, William Morris, who were completely out of sympathy with their time.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES AND SWINBURNE

That band of painters and poets who called themselves quaintly The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood hurried the demise of Victorianism. Their work was a continual denial of its forms; their poems aspired to be paintings, their paintings poems. Under the leadership of William Morris The Pre-Raphaelites enlisted the coöperation of Burne-Jones, the Rossettis and the insecure loyalty of Swinburne. Morris, the most practical member of the group, sought to make over an entire culture; he designed everything from chintzes to stained-glass windows, created furniture, wrought iron, printed books, manufactured glass, needlework, tapestries, tools—all as a protest against the rapid commercialism of a period whose prosperity was essentially shoddy. Morris was a consistent protestant in his poetry and his politics. In the rôle of poet he rebuked the smallness of his times with epics like *The Earthly Paradise;* in the rôle of propagandist he answered narrow individualism with *News from Nowhere,* picturing an ideal England in which the principles of communism had triumphed. Here Morris, dreaming of a medieval Utopia, confused the future with the past. With a simplicity surpassed only by his energy, he turned back to passion in suits of antique armor and to gallants whose heroism was suspiciously like heroics.

Morris failed, partly because the trend toward standardized production was too sweeping to take account of his theories,

partly because he himself was not so much concerned with humanity as with things. He advocated a knightly Socialism not because it would make a more beautiful race but more decorative objects. His sagas show that his preoccupation was with literature instead of life; and, by an ungrateful paradox, a literature that is preferred to life has a swift mortality.

Swinburne suffered from a similar defect. Flying from the prim domesticity sanctified by Tennyson, Swinburne rushed to the unholy (and purely literary) arms of Dolores, Faustine, Félise, Fragoletta, to the neo-paganism of *Atalanta in Calydon*, to the lush intransigence of *Songs before Sunrise*, to Gautier and Hugo and Baudelaire, to a quick succession of enthusiasms and influences. But it was neither Swinburne's political convictions nor his vaguely revolutionary tendencies which made the young men of his day go about "chanting to one another these new, astonishing melodies." It was his mastery of the lightning phrase, cutting through murky philosophizing; it was his wave-like rhythms rising and crashing on startled shores; it was his headlong fervor coming immediately after a decade of cautious hesitancy. Most of all, from a literary-historical point of view, it was his technique which affected the entire conception of English metrics. English poetry had been slavishly devoted to its norm, the *iamb;* Swinburne, by a lavish use of the dactyl, the choriambus and the anapest, gave poetry a new motion, a polyphonic freedom, an orchestral sweep and sonority. He enlarged the potentialities of English prosody. "Nor," writes Edmund Gosse, "was his singular vogue due only to this extraordinary metrical ingenuity; the effect of his artistic personality was itself intoxicating, even delirious. He was the poet of youth insurgent against all the restraints of conventionality and custom."

RISE AND DECLINE OF THE ESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY

A further, if more limited, revolt ensued. Oscar Wilde, dilettante *de luxe*, attempted to make the 'Nineties draw up an esthetic declaration of independence; the beauty they championed, taking a leaf from the French symbolists, was to be "its own excuse for being." Wilde's was, in the most outspoken manner, the first use of estheticism as a slogan; the battle-cry of the group was actually the now outworn but then revolu-

tionary "Art for Art's sake"! And, so sick were people of the pinchbeck ornaments of the immediate past, that the slogan won. At least, temporarily.

The Yellow Book, the organ of the révoltés, appeared (1894-1897), representing a reasoned if limited reaction. The Rhymers' Club was the nucleus and its members—among them Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Victor Plarr, John Davidson, Arthur Symons, W. B. Yeats—met at the Cheshire Cheese where, over their cakes and ale, they fondly hoped to restore the spirit of the Elizabethan age. Unfortunately they lacked both the gusto and the initiative of their Mermaid Tavern models. Where the Elizabethans were all for size, the sad young men were all for subtlety; instead of being large and careless, they were cramped and self-conscious, writing with one eye on the British public which they hoped to startle, and the other on the French poets whom they hoped to impress. But, underneath the desire to shock the middle-classes, their standards were as prescribed as those they derided. To be mildly heretical was their unwritten orthodoxy; instead of being sentimental about virgins they were sentimental about street-walkers.

Until its collapse after the trial of Wilde, the Esthetic Movement gathered a show of strength which was, however, weakened by its central fallacy. It tried to drag life down to literature instead of bringing literature up to life. The young men's prophet was Walter Pater; their stronghold the ivory tower; their program a mixture of Greek-Anglican intellectuality and Parnassian impressionism. "But," as C. E. Andrews and M. O. Percival point out in *Poetry of the Nineties,* "they left behind the intellectual side of Pater, and the gem-like flame was fed purely by emotions. The esthetes' search for beauty became a search for sensations. They did not face the whole of life . . . but they selected from life its strange colors and its strange experiences. They loved to see in the real world glimpses that *seemed* exotic and remote."

Almost the first act of the "new" men was to rouse and outrage their immediate predecessors. This end-of-the-century desire to shock, which was so strong and natural an impulse, still has a place of its own—as an antidote. Mid-Victorian propriety and self-satisfaction crumbled under the swift audacities of rebellious spirits. The old walls fell; the public, once so apathetic to *belles-lettres,* was more than attentive to every

phase of literary experimentation. The last decade of the nineteenth century was so tolerant of novelty in art and ideas, that it would seem, says Holbrook Jackson in his penetrative summary, *The Eighteen-Nineties*, "as though the declining century wished to make amends for several decades of artistic monotony. It may indeed be something more than a coincidence that placed this decade at the close of a century, and *fin de siècle* may have been at once a swan song and a deathbed repentance."

Thereafter, the movement (if such it may be called), surfeited with its own excesses, fell into the mere poses of revolt; it degenerated into a half-hearted defense of artificialities.

It scarcely needed W. S. Gilbert (in *Patience*) or Robert Hichens (in *The Green Carnation*) to satirize its distorted attitudinizing. It strained itself to death; it became its own burlesque of the bizarre, an extravaganza of extravagance. "The period" (I am again quoting Holbrook Jackson) "was as certainly a period of decadence as it was a period of renaissance. The decadence was to be seen in a perverse and finicking glorification of the fine arts and mere artistic virtuosity on the one hand, and a militant commercial movement on the other. . . . The eroticism which became so prevalent in the verse of many of the younger poets was minor because it was little more than a pose—not because it was erotic. . . . It was a passing mood which gave the poetry of the hour a hothouse fragrance; a perfume faint, yet unmistakable and strange."

But most of the elegant and disillusioned young men overshot their mark. Vulgar health reasserted itself; an inherent though long repressed vitality sought new channels. Arthur Symons deserted his hectic Muse, Richard Le Gallienne abandoned his preciosity, and the group began to disintegrate. The esthetic philosophy was wearing thin; it had already begun to fray and reveal its essential shabbiness. Wilde, himself, possessed the three things which he said the English would never forgive—youth, power and enthusiasm. But in trying to make an exclusive cult of beauty, Wilde had also tried to make it evade actuality; he urged that art should not, in any sense, be a part of life but an escape from it. "The proper school to learn art in is not Life—but Art." And in the same essay ("The Decay of Lying") he wrote, "All bad Art comes from returning to Life and Nature, and elevating them into ideals." Else-

where he declared his motto: "The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has discovered."

Such a cynical and, in essence, silly philosophy could not go unchallenged. Its snobbish fastidiousness, its pale pretense was bound to arouse the red blood of common reality. This negative attitude received its answer in the work of that determined yea-sayer, W. E. Henley.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Henley repudiated this languid estheticism; he scorned a mincing art which was out of touch with the world. His was a large and sweeping affirmation. He felt that mere existence was glorious: life was coarse, difficult, often dangerous and dirty, but splendid at the heart. Art, he knew, could not be separated from the dreams and hungers of man; it could not flourish only on its own essences or technical accomplishments. To live, poetry would have to share the fears, angers, hopes and struggles of the prosaic world. So Henley came like a salt breeze blowing through a perfumed, heavily screened studio. He sang loudly (often, indeed, too loudly) of the joy of living and the courage of the "unconquerable soul." He was a powerful influence not only as a poet but as a critic and editor. In the latter capacity he gathered about him such men as Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells, W. B. Yeats, T. E. Brown, J. M. Barrie. None of these men were his disciples, some were much older, but none came into contact with him without being influenced in some way by his sharp and positive personality. A pioneer and something of a prophet, he was one of the first to champion the paintings of Whistler and to proclaim the genius of Rodin.

Historically considered, Henley represents another transition; his is the bridge between the large if loose optimism of Browning and the applied imperialism of Kipling. Both extremes find a voice—and a prolonged one—in his work. "Life! More life!" he shouted with the over-eagerness of one afflicted by physical infirmities. "More life!"—particularly English life which, with the authority of sword and gospel, must be broadcast over both hemispheres—but life, no matter how undisciplined, at any cost . . . and the more boisterous the better.

Life—give me life until the end,
That at the very top of being,
The battle-spirit shouting in my blood,
Out of the reddest hell of the fight
I may be snatched and flung
Into the everlasting lull,
The immortal, incommunicable dream.

But Henley's verse is not always shrill. When he forgot to be muscular, he fashioned ballades and rondeaus with a dexterity scarcely surpassed by Swinburne, lyrics of surprisingly delicate texture, free verse that anticipated a movement two generations later, and "voluntaries" of the city on the Thames with Whistlerian glamour. Further than that, Henley's noisy periods are redeemed by his passionate enthusiasm for nobility in whatever cause it was joined. He loved the world in all its moods. Bus-drivers, hospital interiors, scrubwomen, a panting train, the mystery and squalor of London's alleys, all found a voice in his lines; his later work contains more than a hint of the delight in science and machinery which was later to be sounded more fully in the work of Rudyard Kipling.

THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND J. M. SYNGE

In 1889, William Butler Yeats published his *Wanderings of Oisin;* in the same year Douglas Hyde, scholar and folk-lorist, brought out his *Book of Gaelic Stories.*

The revival of Gaelic and the renascence of Irish literature may be said to date from the publication of those two books. The fundamental idea of both men and their followers was the same. It was to create a literature which would express the national consciousness of Ireland through a purely national art. They began to reflect the strange background of dreams, politics, hopelessness and heroism which is proverbially Irish. This community of fellowship and aims is to be found in the varied but allied work of William Butler Yeats, "Æ." (George W. Russell), Moira O'Neill, Lionel Johnson, Katharine Tynan, Padraic Colum and others. The first fervor gone, a period of dullness set in. After reanimating the old myths, surcharging the legendary heroes with a new significance, it seemed that the movement was losing itself in a literary mysticism. But there followed an increasing concern with the peas-

ant, the migratory laborer, the tramp; an interest that was something of a reaction against the influence of Yeats and his too arbitrary, over-symbolized otherworldliness. In 1904, the Celtic Revival reached its height with John Millington Synge, who was not only the greatest dramatist of the Irish Theatre, but (to quote such contrary critics as George Moore and Harold Williams) "one of the greatest dramatists who has written in English." Synge's poetry, brusque and all too small in quantity, was a minor occupation with him, yet the quality and power of it is unmistakable. Its content is never great, but the raw vigor in it was to serve as a bold banner—a sort of a brilliant Jolly Roger—for the younger men of a subsequent period. It was not only this dramatist's brief verses and his intensely musical prose but his sharp prefaces which were to exercise his readers.

In the introduction to the *Playboy of the Western World*, Synge declared, "When I was writing *The Shadow of the Glen* some years ago, I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kitchen. This matter is, I think, of some importance; for in countries where the imagination of the people and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words—and at the same time to give the reality which is at the root of all poetry, in a natural and comprehensive form." This not only explains Synge's impulse but his idiom, possibly the raciest in modern literature.

Synge's poetic power is unquestionably greatest in his plays. In *The Well of the Saints, The Playboy of the Western World* and *Riders to the Sea* there is more beauty of form, more richness of language than in any piece of dramatic writing since the Elizabethans. Yeats, when he first heard Synge's early one-act play, *The Shadow of the Glen,* is said to have exclaimed "Euripides." A half year later when Synge read him *Riders to the Sea,* Yeats again confined his enthusiasm to a single word:—"Aeschylus!" The years have shown that Yeats's exaggeration was not wholly a compatriot's *beau geste.*

Although Synge's poetry was not his major concern, numbering only twenty-four original pieces and eighteen translations, it had a surprising effect. It marked a point of departure,

a reaction against the too-polished verse of his immediate predecessors as well as the dehumanized mysticism of many of his associates. In that memorable preface to his *Poems* he wrote what was a manifesto and at the same time a classic *credo* for all that called itself the "new" poetry. "I have often thought," it begins, "that at the side of poetic diction, which every one condemns, modern verse contains a great deal of poetic material, using 'poetic' in the same special sense. The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest, but when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation in the way that men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops. . . . Even if we grant that exalted poetry can be kept successfully by itself, the strong things of life are needed in poetry also, to show that what is exalted or tender is not made by feeble blood."

RUDYARD KIPLING

New tendencies are contagious. But they also disclose themselves simultaneously in places and people where there has been no point of contact. Even before Synge proclaimed the wild loveliness in casual life, Kipling was illuminating, in a totally different manner, the wealth of poetic material in things hitherto regarded as too commonplace for poetry. Before literary England had quite recovered from a surfeit of Victorian priggishness and Pre-Raphaelite preciosity, the young Kipling came out of India with high spirits and a great tide of life, sweeping all before him. An obscure Anglo-Indian journalist, the publication of his *Barrack-room Ballads* in 1892 brought him sudden notice. By 1895, he was internationally famous. Plunging through the past as through a withered underbrush, he sprang into the open field of the present. Its mechanical obstacles did not deter him. Kipling gloried in the material world; he did more—he glorified it. He pierced the tough exteriors of seemingly prosaic things—things like machinery, bridge-building, cockney soldiers, slang, steam, the dirty by-products of science (witness "M'Andrews Hymn" and "The Bell Buoy")—and uncovered their hidden glamour. "Romance is gone," sighed most of his contemporaries,

. . . and all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.

That sentence (from his poem "The King") furnishes the key to his idiom; it explains how, without theories or technical innovations, the author of *The Five Nations* helped rejuvenate English verse.

Reality is Kipling's romanticism; he rolls drums and sounds clarions for another "crowded hour of glorious life." But it is not Henley's abstraction for which Kipling fills his fife; he composes marches for soldiers, explorers, mechanics, foot-sloggers—for life which is no emotional generality, but life in action. Motion itself is apostrophized in his verse. Where the world is going is of no particular concern to Kipling; the fact that it moves is all-sufficient.

Kipling, with his perception of ordinary people in terms of ordinary life, is one of the strongest links between the Wordsworth-Browning era and the apostles of vigor, beginning with Masefield. There are serious defects in Kipling's work, particularly in his more facile poetry. He falls into a journalistic ease with a tendency to jingle; he is fond of a militaristic drum-banging that is as blatant as the insularity he condemns. But a burning if bland faith shines through his dogmas. His best work vibrates with an intensity that transforms the once tawdry, that lifts the vulgar and incidental to the universal—the universal, that is, in terms of the British Empire.

JOHN MASEFIELD

All art is a twofold reviving—a re-appraisal of subject and a reanimating of form. Poetry becomes perennially "new" by returning to the old—with a different consciousness, a greater awareness. In 1911, when art was again searching for novelty, John Masefield created something startling and new by going back to 1385 and *The Canterbury Pilgrims*. Employing both the Chaucerian model and a form similar to the practically forgotten Byronic stanza, Masefield wrote in rapid succession, *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), *The Daffodil Fields* (1913)—four astonishing rhymed narratives and four of the most remarkable poems of his generation. Expressive of every rugged

phase of life, these poems, uniting old and new manners, responded to Synge's proclamation that "the strong things of life are needed in poetry also . . . and it may almost be said that before verse can be human again it must be brutal."

Masefield brought back to poetry that mixture of beauty and brutality which is its most human and enduring quality. He brought back that rich and almost vulgar vividness which is the life-blood of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, of Burns, of Villon, of Heine—and of all those who were not only great artists but great humanists. As a purely descriptive poet, he can take his place with the masters of sea- and landscape. As an imaginative realist, he showed those who were stumbling from one wild eccentricity to another, that humanity itself was wilder, stranger, far more thrilling than anything in the world—or out of it. Few things in contemporary poetry are as powerful as the regeneration of Saul Kane (in *The Everlasting Mercy*) or the story of *Dauber*, the tale of a tragic sea-voyage and a dreamer who wanted to be a painter. The vigorous description of rounding Cape Horn in the latter poem is a masterpiece in itself. Masefield's later volumes are quieter in tone, more measured in technique; there is a genuinely religious ring to many of his Shakespearean sonnets. But the swinging surge is in all his work from *Salt Water Ballads* (1902) to *Reynard the Fox* (1919).

THE WAR AND THE GEORGIANS

In 1914, the line of demarcation between Masefield and the younger men was not sharp. Realism was again in the ascendancy. So definite a style as Masefield's was bound to be imitated. It even attracted W. W. Gibson who deserted bowery arcades to follow the rude trail Masefield had blazed. Gibson reënforced the interest in actuality by turning from a preoccupation with shining knights, faultless queens, ladies in distress, and all the paraphernalia of hackneyed medieval romances, to write about ferrymen, berry-pickers, stone-cutters, farmers, printers, circus-men, carpenters—dramatizing (and sometimes theatricalizing) the primitive emotions of ordinary people in *Livelihood*, *Daily Bread* and *Fires*. Candor had been asking new questions. It found unexpected answers in the war; repressed emotionalism discovered a new and terrible outlet.

The first volume of the biennial *Georgian Poetry* had just appeared when the war caught up the youth of England in a gust of national fervor. Not only the young men but their seniors joined what seemed then to be "the Great Adventure," only to find that it was, as one of them has since called it, "the Late Great Nightmare." After the early flush of romanticism had passed, the voices of bitter disillusion were heard. Not at first, for the censorship was omnipresent. But Siegfried Sassoon's fierce satires and burning denunciations could not be stilled, the mocking lines of Robert Graves began to be quoted, Wilfred Owen's posthumous poems painted a picture the very opposite of the journalistic jingo verses which attempted to paint civilization's greatest horror in bright and cheerful colors.

Recently, in an article on a similar theme, Graves wrote: "The poetry written by actual soldiers is perhaps too familiar for discussion, but we may remind ourselves of one or two outstanding facts usually overlooked: that Rupert Brooke saw many warlike scenes but no actual fighting, that Robert Nichols, with the best of intentions, only saw three weeks' service in France and this on a quiet sector with the artillery: that of the other poets with reputations as War-poets not more than four or five (including Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen who was killed just before the Armistice, Isaac Rosenberg, Edmund Blunden and Herbert Read) bore the heat and burden of the War; and that these unanimously vilified rather than celebrated the War: and that of these only Siegfried Sassoon published his verse while the War was still on."

Rupert Brooke, the most popular of his group, remains, in most minds, as the type of romantic warrior; a symbolic figure not uncommon at the beginning of the War. But his poetry, as well as his correspondence, contains evidence that, had he survived the first few years of warfare, his verse—had he written at all—would have been akin to the unromanticized passion of those who, like Sassoon and Owen, saw the horror at close range and at length. Even his comrade, Charles Hamilton Sorley, that marvelous boy killed at twenty, hearing the news of Brooke's enlistment, wrote: "Rupert Brooke is far too obsessed with his own sacrifice, regarding the going to war of himself (and others) as a highly intense, remarkable and sacrificial exploit, whereas it is merely the conduct demanded

of him (and others) by the turn of circumstances, where non-compliance with this demand would have made life intolerable. He has clothed his attitude in fine words: but his is, nevertheless, the sentimental attitude."

The effect of the War on the older and more established poets was definite if less direct. The Georgian group issued two more volumes (there were five in all, the last being *Georgian Poetry 1920-1922*), but the spirit had gone out of it. Rupert Brooke and Edward Thomas had been silenced by death. The work of Walter de la Mare grew increasingly somber; John Masefield no longer contributed; D. H. Lawrence—never a Georgian at heart and admitted to the volumes with a few circumspect poems—turned to prose; Lascelles Abercrombie wrote little after 1919; Ralph Hodgson ceased to write at all. Only W. H. Davies, living in a world which, seemingly common-pastoral, was really a world of his own, continued to warble his delighted, thought-free bird-notes. The loss to the group of these men—or the loss of their power—was not compensated by the addition of Martin Armstrong, William Kerr, V. Sackville-West, J. D. C. Pellow, Edward Shanks, Thomas Moult and other fashioners of what Sassoon called "crocus-crowded lyrics."

AFTERMATH

Peace brought back but few of the younger poets. The most brilliant of them, Charles Hamilton Sorley, was killed on the threshold of an indubitably great future. The career of Isaac Rosenberg, author of an amazing poetic drama, was ended almost before it had begun. Rupert Brooke died in the midst of his singing; so did Edward Thomas, Francis Ledwidge, Cameron Wilson. Wilfred Owen was struck down just as he had found his own full-throated utterance. It is impossible to calculate how much has been lost to English poetry by the death of these singers.

One after-effect was particularly noticeable. English literature suffered not only from individual losses but from general shock. This shock affected the writers of every school and diverted where it did not arrest the current of contemporary verse. It threw Masefield back to the classic drama of half a century ago; it silenced such of its War-poets who refused to

continue to write about "the collective madness" and yet could think of little else. It created the sharp division between the new group of English pastoral poets and the still younger intellectuals. The reactions of the two contradictory movements are easy to understand. Wishing to escape the mechanistic urban civilization which had scarred Europe with ruins, many of the poets turned hopefully to the traditional curlew-calling, plover-haunted English countryside. The machine is a dead thing spreading death, they cried; only the soil brings forth. "We have had enough of destructive ingenuities; let us go back to creative simplicities." Following, more or less consciously, the example of that genuinely naïf poet, W. H. Davies, a small cohort of writers began to sing exclusively about the charms of childhood, sunsets and rural delights. But where Davies's innocence is natural and deep, the simplicity of most of the pastoral Georgians is predetermined and superficial. Much of the resulting poetry is inspired by the wish to avoid past memories rather than by a spontaneous affection for the present scene; much of it, indeed, seems a sort of spiritual convalescence. In some instances, it becomes a *reductio ad absurdum,* a literary affectation that leads one of these artificial shepherds to write such unconsciously comic strophes as:

> I lingered at a gate and talked
> A little with a lonely lamb.
> He told me of the great still night,
> Of calm starlight,
> And of the lady moon, who'd stoop
> For a kiss sometimes. . . .
> Of how, when sheep grew old,
> As their faith told
> They went without a pang
> To far green fields, where fall
> Perpetual streams that call
> To deathless nightingales.

These fatuous, cliché-crammed stanzas, duly enshrined in the Georgian anthologies, are typical of the worst phase of this movement. But the true pastoral note is not without its singers. The bucolics of Edmund Blunden, W. J. Turner, Frank Prewett and others contain a quality which makes the verses interesting, especially in view of the conditions which caused them.

THE "LITERATURE OF NERVES"

Opposed to the rustic tendency, a group emerged headed by the three Sitwells. Strongly influenced by the work of T. S. Eliot and revolting from the false naïveté of the Georgians—particularly that part of it dominated by J. C. Squire of the *London Mercury* and derisively nicknamed the Squirearchy—the expression at first took the form of satire. Sometimes the burlesque was broad, sometimes the allusions were so erudite and private that only the initiate found them intelligible. But their poetry was not always compounded of wildness prepense; it was mad only north-north-west, and soon it became evident that what they had to say was of particular significance to their times. Their patently artificial figures began to breathe; their pastiche was humanized. Nostalgia welled up beneath the elegances, reminiscent of the 'Nineties, and (again reminding us of the *fin de siècle* esthetes) this yearning back to a happier world clothed itself in foreign symbolism. Differing from the Parnassian poets, they did not depict their objects—or objectives—by direct statement; like the Symbolists, they relied on the power of elision and suggestion, compelling readers to participate in the process of creation, making them fill the gaps between thought and figure, between meaning and mystery. They would have agreed with Jules Huret who insisted,

> It is the perfect use of this mystery that constitutes the symbol: little by little to evoke an object in order to show a condition of the mind; or inversely to choose an object, and from it to disengage a state of the mind by a series of decipherings. . . . There should always be an enigma in poetry, and the aim of literature—it has no other—is to evoke objects.

The movement, as may be deduced, was primarily intellectual; though it developed an emotionalism, or at least a state of feeling of its own, it was bound to arbitrary tenets. But Edith Sitwell, the creator, triumphed over the tenets of Edith Sitwell, the theorist. The poet Herbert Read was not always in agreement with the critic Herbert Read, who attempted to resolve the old dispute by saying "Poetry is creative expression: Prose is constructive expression." maintaining "we now see

that poetry may inhere in a single word, in a single syllable, and may therefore in an extreme case be without rhythm."

For several years the "anti-Georgians" sent up rockets of savage and esoteric brilliance. Nor did all of these explosions end in a shower of burnt sticks. Whatever their defects, they were faults of excess—more acceptable than the extravagances of dearth—and their idiom (particularly Edith Sitwell's and Peter Quennell's) was like no other's. Much of it, high-pitched and exacerbated, belongs to the literature of nerves. But its implicit challenge is always provocative, sometimes thrilling and never dull.

SUMMARY

Though several of the best known poets appeared in the Georgian anthologies, most of those who won favor after 1912 belong to no actual group and cannot be classified. Yet no account of the first part of the century would be complete without a tribute to the glorified nursery rhymes and moon-soaked fantasies of Walter de la Mare, the limpid and unperturbed lyrics of Ralph Hodgson, the brooding nobilities of Charlotte Mew, the fretted energy of Anna Wickham, the whimsical tunes of James Stephens, the nimble versatility of Humbert Wolfe, the fierce and uncompromising introspections of D. H. Lawrence.

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This collection is a companion volume to *Modern American Poetry*, the period covered by both volumes being the same. The two books aim to give a fairly complete picture of the two branches of our literature, revealing many contrasts and a few general differences. Broadly speaking, modern British poetry is smoother, more matured, and, molded by centuries of literature, richer in associations. American poetry, no longer colonially imitative, is sharper, more vigorously experimental; it is full of youth, with youth's occasional (and natural) crudities. Where the English product is formulated, precise and (in spite of a few fluctuations) true to its past, the American expression is more varied and—being the reflection of partly indigenous, partly naturalized and largely unassimilated ideas and temperaments—is characteristically uncoördinated. American poetry might be described as a rush of unconnected mountain torrents and valley streams; instead of one placidly mov-

ing body, there are a dozen turbulent currents. English poetry, on the other hand, may be compared to a broad and luxuriating river with a series of tributaries contributing to the now thinning, now widening channel.

It is, I believe, salutary to observe how the course of poetry in Great Britain has been deflected temporarily in the last forty years, how it has swung from one tendency toward another, and how, for all its bends and twists, it has lost neither its strength nor its direction.

L. U.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Christina Georgina Rossetti, was born in London, December 5, 1830. She was the youngest of the four children of Frances Mary Lavinia (Polidori) and Gabriele Rossetti, an Italian poet, exile and professor at King's College. The entire family was unusually creative as well as scholarly. Her father, an authority on Italian literature, had published a volume of religious verse in 1852; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, her oldest brother, established his reputation in painting as well as literature; her second brother, William Michael, was an essayist and man of letters; her older sister Maria Francesca, who later became an Anglican nun, was known for a searching commentary, *Shadow of Dante*, probably influenced by her father.

Christina grew up in London, "enjoying," says Edmund Gosse, "the advantages and disadvantages of the strange society of Italian exiles and English eccentrics which her father gathered about him." The first mention of her name in the letters of her family shows her a poet at the age of twelve, Christina having contributed two poems to a magazine edited by her brothers. At eighteen (after having followed the Rossetti tradition of verse-and-picture-making) she posed for the Virgin in Dante Gabriel's first important picture. Infected from the cradle with over-seriousness, the child was preoccupied to the point of morbidity, delicate in health, detached in manner. "I was," she wrote many years later, "a very melancholy girl," and this early gravity gave her features that typical Pre-Raphaelite sadness which made her a fitting model for her brother as well as his confrères, Millais, Madox-Brown and Holman Hunt.

Although she admired her father, it was her mother—and her mother's image reflected in her sister—that she worshiped. She actually applauded Maria Francesca's refusal to look at the mummies in the British Museum "because she realized how the general Resurrection might happen even as she looked at those solemn corpses turned into a sight for sight-seers."

When she was seventeen her grandfather, Gaetano Polidori, privately printed her first volume, *Verses*. A year later she met James Collinson, a minor painter of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood whom Dante Gabriel considered "a stunner," and became engaged

to him. Biographers have been unable to agree as to which of Christina's two attachments affected her most. Edmund Gosse says distinctly, "She was twice sought in marriage, but each time, from religious scruples, she refused her suitor; on the *former* of these occasions she sorrowed greatly and her suffering is reflected in much of her song." Her brother, William Michael, corroborates this, in his Memoir: "He (Collinson) had struck a staggering blow at Christina Rossetti's peace of mind on the very threshold of womanly life." But Elizabeth Luther Cary is of another opinion. With a reticence abnormal in a biographer, Mrs. Cary, refusing to give the name of either man, contents herself with: "In 1866 at the age of thirty-six,[1] she again suffered from her deep interest in a suitor, whom she could not marry owing to her religious scruples. This incident, which involved a genuine and strong attachment, is probably responsible for what is most moving and most exquisite in her poetry."

Twice, then, Christina refused to marry because of "religious scruples." Collinson, originally a member of the Church of England, had been converted to Catholicism, reverted to the English Church at Christina's request, and (possibly because he had religious scruples of his own) 'verted once more to Catholicism. And though Christina was a member of the Tractarian or Anglo-Catholic party, she would have none of him. But the case of Cayley, whom she loved, says her brother, "to the last days of his life, December 5, 1883," is more inexplicable. Cayley was of the same denomination as Christina and was "a singularly unworldly person." Yet their love was not consummated. Although Cayley was religious he was evidently not religious enough. "She loved him deeply and permanently, but," W. M. Rossetti remarks vaguely, "she must no doubt have probed his faith and found it either wrong or woefully defective." It needs no analyst to furnish the obvious clew not only to Christina's withdrawal from marriage, but, as evidenced in poem after poem, from the normal give and take of life. She could not surrender to any earthly lover for she was committed—at first half-consciously, later candidly—to the Heavenly Bridegroom. She turned from the hands of Collinson and Cayley to the arms of Christ the more easily since, to her fixed faith, abnegation and affirmation were one. Her religion was "far more a thing of the heart than of the mind: she clung to and

[1] This is not in accord with W. M. Rossetti's dates. "I must next deal," he writes, "with a personage of higher type, Charles Bagot Cayley, a man of letters and an author, but less author than scholar. Christina may have first known him as far back as 1847 or so, and again in 1854; but the two did not meet much until some such date as 1860." Christina was, at the latest, not quite thirty when she became intimate with Cayley.

loved the Christian creed because she loved Jesus Christ." But even here her love was shame-faced, saintly but not serene. Unlike her sister Maria, whom she followed to the very threshold of the convent, she was confident neither of self nor salvation; she remained uncertain, unworthy. As she grew older, she retreated further and further into self-abasement. Her days were a succession of perpetual church-goings and communions, prayers and fasts, submission to clerical direction, oblations, confessions, literally hundreds of hymns, "Songs for Strangers and Pilgrims," and devotional verses whose sincerity cannot conceal their mawkish reiterations.

Meanwhile, without the slightest ambition for literary prominence, she had become established as one of the period's undoubted poets. At thirty-two she published *Goblin Market* (1862); four years later, *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (1866) appeared. Both volumes were widely circulated and applauded. At that time her poetry (now seen to be made of far finer substance than her brother's) was considered inferior to Dante Gabriel's—an opinion in which she concurred. It was natural that she should carry spiritual humility into her literary life, and she depreciated herself at every opportunity. In her introductory paragraph to the "Monna Innominata" sequence, she refers to Mrs. Browning as "the Great Poetess of our own day and nation," preferring the limp ardor of the "Portuguese" sonnets—those over-colored and heavily drooping wax-flowers—to her own pulsating quatorzains. But uncritical self-depreciation (not "over-scrupulosity" as her brother averred) was her weakness. Invited to contribute to a volume of *Representative Poems of Living Poets* in 1886, she chose only three: "A Christmas Carol," "An Apple Gathering" and "No, Thank You, John," the last two being as unrepresentative, and as unlovely, as anything she ever wrote.

It is impossible to say how many poems she wrote; a scant thousand are published in her *Collected Poems*. But, though numerous volumes appeared, her first two books contain most of her best. "Goblin Market" is her fairy-child, unlike anything she ever conceived. It has something of "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" combined with an unearthly color which is less light than translucence; it is Hans Christian Andersen played on an elfin flute. "The narrative," concluded the *London Quarterly Review*, "has so matter-of-fact and at the same time so bewildering an air, that we are fairly puzzled into acceptance of everything." Too long to reprint in these pages, attention must be called to its appropriately goblin-hopping rhythm; its childish legend and most unchildish moral; its catalogue of fruits, so tropical in imagery and so exact in epithet as to summon particularities of taste; and to its very Pre-

Raphaelite picture of the two sisters, as lingering as the drawing of the younger:

> White and golden Lizzie stood,
> Like a lily in a flood,
> Like a rock of blue-veined stone
> Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
> Like a beacon left alone
> In a hoary roaring sea,
> Sending up a golden fire.
> Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
> White with blossoms honey-sweet
> Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
> Like a royal virgin town
> Topped with gilded dome and spire
> Close beleaguered by a fleet
> Mad to tug her standard down.

The contrast between "Goblin Market" and all her other poems is startling. With one or two exceptions ("A Birthday" is one of them) the light spirit is gone; the nimble pace slows down to a measured solemnity. The prevailing note is melancholy—a sadness that searches the soul but never probes the intellect. She had the habit of questioning, one might say, without curiosity. "Faith with her," says W. M. Rossetti, "was faith pure and absolute: an entire acceptance of a thing revealed, not a quest for confirmation or demonstrative proof. . . . Her attitude of mind was 'I believe because I am told to believe, and I know that the authority which tells me to believe is the only real authority, God.' "

This unreserved acceptance of dogma sharply differentiates Christina Rossetti from her transatlantic contemporary, Emily Dickinson, with whom she has been compared. Apart from the American's imagery and idiom, difficult enough to the Englishwoman, Christina would have been outraged at the attitude of the protesting Puritan; the style would have been incomprehensible, the spirit incredible. Here was a woman—presumably a Christian—who not only challenged her God, but dared interrogate, tease, berate, rally and fling herself upon him. Emily's flippant intimacy would have seemed no less than purposeful blasphemy. Yet it was Emily Dickinson, not Christina Rossetti, who was the true mystic. Christina absorbed her faith, Emily translated it. Christina was devout, uplifted, sometimes *exalté;* Emily was impertinent, indirect, and always the metaphysician. Christina, continually submerging her personality, wrote only what might please her Creator; Emily, individual to the point of refusing a public, wrote only to please herself. One returned to God, with passionate meekness, all she had learned from Him; the other, less submissive, gave

Him back a conception of Himself that was a separate creation. That Emily Dickinson's was the more original and entertaining genius—that, as a poet, she exercises a more impelling influence is, I think, indubitable. But it is equally plain that in her rare moments Christina Rossetti attained purer vision and serener heights. There is nobility surpassing charm of epithet, power beyond surprise or eloquence in the ecstatic "From House to Home"—which in concept and dimension is in the line of major poetry—in "Marvel of Marvels," in "Passing Away," of which Swinburne wrote, "It is so much the noblest sacred poem in our language that there is none which comes near enough to stand second."

"Passing Away" is one of the poems which display Christina Rossetti's technical as well as spiritual excellencies. Here, as in "Marvel of Marvels" and others, she delights to ring the changes on an organ-point of rhyme, playing upon a set of strong open vowels as dexterously as the early Italian composers. Her style is traditionally *bel canto* although she does not disdain effects that are supposedly the product of our own generation. She employs balance with skill; uses repetition, that dangerous device, with complete security. Many of her lyrics are rich with adroit echoing, even a mocking, of similar sounds. Some of her finest sonnets (notably the one beginning "The irresponsive silence of the land") are achieved by the pairing of figures and the building up of tone on tone, the repeated word insinuating itself like a muffled but dramatic drum. Melodic grace lifts her preoccupations, whether they inform grave soliloquies or the inconsequential jingles of "Sing-Song," that mixture of delight and dogmatism in which an angel sings with the voice of Dr. Watts. Save at her best, she was not without mannerisms as irritating as Mrs. Browning's or Emily Dickinson's. She dwelt on her heartbreak, relied (poetically) on the broken reed. She was prone to pile up comparisons; some of her most admirable poems—such as "Goblin Market," an illustrative segment of which has been quoted, and "A Birthday"—are little more than a chain of threaded similes. She coddled her clichés; she never tired of writing about roses and lilies, always with the connotations of a minor poet, and of winter, which she saw only as something dismal and bitter.

But if this is true of her best, what is one to say of her worst? Here again, the paradox persists; first and fifth-rate mingle uncritically, inextricably. It is true that most of the "Songs for Strangers and Pilgrims," "Some Feasts and Fasts," "Gifts and Graces," "New Jerusalem and Its Citizens," etc., are endlessly lugubrious. Her hatred—or fear—of the world found complete expression in these dull but undoubtedly autobiographical confessions.

She gave up beauty in her tender youth,
Gave all her hope and joy and pleasant ways;
She covered up her eyes lest they should gaze
On vanity, and chose the bitter truth.
Harsh towards herself, towards other full of ruth,
Servant of servants, little known to praise,
Long prayers and fasts trenched on her nights and days:
She schooled herself to sights and sounds uncouth
That with the poor and stricken she might make
A home, until the least of all sufficed
Her wants; her own self learned she to forsake,
Counting all earthly gain but hurt and loss.
So with calm will she chose and bore the cross
And hated all for love of Jesus Christ.

This is the heart of her secret, if secret it may be called. The world—she says it over and over—is evil, being the abode of the flesh which is the devil. All which is terrestrial and impermanent is Vanity; worse, it is dalliance with sin. Sin (and let the Freudians make what they will of it) fascinated her; her poetry, intent though she was on the soul's salvation, "covered up her eyes" to its multiple manifestations. In prose she declared explicitly, "Strip sin bare from the voluptuousness of music, fascination of gesture, entrancement of the stage, rapture of poetry. . . . Let it stand out bald as the Ten Commandments. Lavish sympathy on the sinner, never on the sin." She, herself, baptized her infant nephew just before his death and "I doubt," her brother assures us, "whether any act of her life yielded her more heartfelt satisfaction."

But if her disposition grew fixedly Calvinistic and her character became "a fountain sealed," the impulse checked in action was spontaneous as ever in composition. Buried among the four hundred and fifty devotional pieces given to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, are some of the bitterest but most authentic verse she ever wrote. True, she reiterates with unvarying insistence, that life is not sweet, that the world is loathsome and foul, that death is merely sleeping from "risk," that earthly mornings are cold and all its twilights gray. But just when we would turn disheartened from these wailings in sackcloth, a voice, clear and compelling, makes us pause, and we know we are once more listening to the accents of authoritative poetry.

Christina Rossetti had suffered much of her life from a chronic weakness of heart. In 1892 she was operated for cancer, bearing the operation well. A year later it became evident that the disease had not been eradicated. It returned, complicated by dropsy. A further operation was impossible; palliatives were given; the end was foreseen. "At the close of a week of collapse and semi-consciousness, she died without a struggle, in the act of inarticulate

prayer." This was on December 29, 1894, just as she had turned sixty-four.

Her spirit persists, though scarcely in the way Christina might have foreseen. Saintliness by withdrawal is not a program which wins general response. Though the world turn from physics to metaphysics, Christina Rossetti can never be one of its prophets. She was an ascetic, not a mystic—a feminine ascetic lachrymose in preoccupation with death. Some of her noble verse is sullied with self-pity. But though she was not one of the world's prophets, she remains one of its undoubted poets—one of the three great women lyricists who wrote in English. She was the forerunner of a generation of women who learned from her the art of keeping expression simple and intense. Though not primarily a technician, and often too ready to rely on decorative generalities, her best work is so felicitous in music, so flexible a medium for emotion, that it has become a model of its kind. Lizette Woodworth Reese, Sara Teasdale and a score of others have gone to school to her; the inflection of Edna St. Vincent Millay is already anticipated in sonnets like "Because you never yet have loved me, dear." In Christina Rossetti the singer and the saint combined. But it was the singer who had the clearer, actually the more spiritual vision. The poetry opened vistas that could not be summoned by the repetition of a creed. The rapt ascetic bowed under a "strangling load"; the poet, winged in her rapture, escaped the yoke and set herself free.

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
  Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
  And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
  In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
  Is come, my love is come to me.

"THE IRRESPONSIVE SILENCE OF THE LAND"

The irresponsive silence of the land,
The irresponsive sounding of the sea,
Speak both one message of one sense to me:—
"Aloof, aloof, we stand aloof; so stand
Thou too aloof bound with the flawless band
In inner solitude; we bind not thee.
But who from thy self-chain shall set thee free?
What heart shall touch thy heart? what hand thy hand?"—

And I am sometimes proud and sometimes meek,
And sometimes I remember days of old
When fellowship seemed not so far to seek
And all the world and I seemed much less cold,
And at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold,
And hope felt strong and life itself not weak.

THE BOURNE

Underneath the growing grass,
  Underneath the living flowers,
  Deeper than the sound of showers:
  There we shall not count the hours
By the shadows as they pass.

Youth and health will be but vain,
  Beauty reckoned of no worth:
  There a very little girth
  Can hold round what once the earth
Seemed too narrow to contain.

"COME BACK TO ME WHO WAIT AND WATCH"

Come back to me who wait and watch for you:—
Or come not yet, for it is over then,
And long it is before you come again,
So far between my pleasures are and few.
While, when you come not, what I do I do,
Thinking, "Now when he comes," my sweetest "when":
For one man is my world of all the men
This wide world holds; O love, my world is you.

Howbeit, to meet you grows almost a pang
Because the pang of parting comes so soon;
My hope hangs waning, waxing, like a moon
Between the heavenly days on which we meet:
Ah me, but where are now the songs I sang
When life was sweet because you called them sweet?

MIRAGE

The hope I dreamed of was a dream,
  Was but a dream; and now I wake
Exceeding comfortless, and worn, and old,
  For a dream's sake.

Lie still, lie still, my breaking heart;
  My silent heart, lie still and break;
Life, and the world, and mine own self, are changed
  For a dream's sake.

DREAM LAND

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep:
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
  And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
  That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
  The purple land.

She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
  Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
  Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake,
Night that no morn shall break,
Till joy shall overtake
  Her perfect peace.

"I LAID BESIDE THY GATE AM LAZARUS"

I laid beside thy gate am Lazarus;
See me or see me not, I still am there,
Hungry and thirsty, sore and sick and bare,
Dog-comforted and crumb-solicitous:
While thou in all thy ways art sumptuous,
Daintily clothed, with dainties for thy fare:
Thus a world's wonder thou art quit of care,
And, be I seen or not seen, I am thus.
One day a worm for thee, a worm for me:
With my worm angel-songs and trumpet-burst
And plenitude an end of all desire:
But what for thee, alas! but what for thee?
Fire and an unextinguishable thirst,
Thirst in an unextinguishable fire.

"IF THERE BE ANY ONE"

If there be any one can take my place
And make you happy whom I grieve to grieve,
Think not that I can grudge it, but believe
I do commend you to that nobler grace,
That readier wit than mine, that sweeter face;
Yea, since your riches make me rich, conceive
I too am crowned, while bridal crowns I weave,
And thread the bridal dance with jocund pace.

For if I did not love you, it might be
That I should grudge you some one dear delight;
But since the heart is yours that was mine own,
Your pleasure is my pleasure, right my right,
Your honorable freedom makes me free,
And you companioned I am not alone.

WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not see the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

REMEMBER ME WHEN I AM GONE AWAY

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned.
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

O EARTH, LIE HEAVILY UPON HER EYES

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

"TIME FLIES, HOPE FLAGS, LIFE PLIES A WEARIED WING"

Time flies, hope flags, life plies a wearied wing;
Death following hard on life gains ground apace;
Faith runs with each and rears an eager face,
Outruns the rest, makes light of everything,
Spurns earth, and still finds breath to pray and sing;
While love ahead of all uplifts his praise,
Still asks for grace and still gives thanks for grace,
Content with all day brings and night will bring.
Life wanes; and when love folds his wings above
Tired hope, and less we feel his conscious pulse,
Let us go fall asleep, dear friend, in peace:
A little while, and age and sorrow cease;
A little while, and life reborn annuls
Loss and decay and death, and all is love.

"TRUST ME, I HAVE NOT EARNED YOUR DEAR REBUKE"

Trust me, I have not earned your dear rebuke,—
I love, as you would have me, God the most;
Would lose not Him, but you, must one be lost
Nor with Lot's wife cast back a faithless look,

Unready to forego what I forsook;
This say I, having counted up the cost,
This, though I be the feeblest of God's host,
The sorriest sheep Christ shepherds with His crook.

Yet while I love my God the most, I deem
That I can never love you overmuch;
I love Him more, so let me love you too;
Yea, as I apprehend it, love is such
I cannot love you if I love not Him,
I cannot love Him if I love not you.

DREAM-LOVE

Young Love lies sleeping
  In May-time of the year,
Among the lilies,
  Lapped in tender light:
White lambs come grazing,
  White doves come building there;
And round about him
  The May-bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow
  For O, a softer cheek;
Broad leaves cast shadow
  Upon the heavy eyes:
There winds and waters
  Grow lulled and scarcely speak;
There twilight lingers
  The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming;
  But who shall tell the dream?
A perfect sunlight
  On rustling forest tips;
A perfect moonlight
  Upon a rippling stream;
Or perfect silence,
  Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odors round him
  To fill the drowsy air;
Weave silent dances
  Around him to and fro;
For O, in waking,
  The sights are not so fair,
And song and silence
  Are not like these below.

Young Love lies drowsing
  Away to poppied death;
Cool shadows deepen
  Across the sleeping face:
So fails the summer
  With warm, delicious breath;
And what hath autumn
  To give us in its place?

Draw close the curtains
  Of branched evergreen;
Change cannot touch them
  With fading fingers sere:
Here the first violets
  Perhaps will bud unseen,
And a dove, maybe,
  Return to nestle here.

LIFE AND DEATH

Life is not sweet. One day it will be sweet
  To shut our eyes and die:
Nor feel the wild flowers blow, nor birds dart by
  With flitting butterfly,
Nor grass grow long above our heads and feet,
Nor hear the happy lark that soars sky high,
Nor sigh that spring is fleet and summer fleet,
  Nor mark the waxing wheat,
Nor know who sits in our accustomed seat.

Life is not good. One day it will be good
To die, then live again;
To sleep meanwhile: so not to feel the wane
Of shrunk leaves dropping in the wood,
Nor hear the foamy lashing of the main,
Nor mark the blackened bean-fields, nor where stood
Rich ranks of golden grain;
Only dense refuse stubble clothe the plain:
Asleep from risk, asleep from pain.

SING-SONG

(*Selections*)

Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush,
Dead at the foot of a snowberry bush,—
Weave him a coffin of rush,
Dig him a grave where the soft mosses grow,
Raise him a tombstone of snow.

*

Hope is like a harebell trembling from its birth,
Love is like a rose the joy of all the earth;
Faith is like a lily lifted high and white,
Love is like a lovely rose the world's delight;
Harebells and sweet lilies show a thornless growth,
But the rose with all its thorns excels them both.

*

Twist me a crown of wind-flowers;
That I may fly away
To hear the singers at their song,
And players at their play.

Put on your crown of wind-flowers:
But whither would you go?
Beyond the surging of the sea
And the storms that blow.

Alas! your crown of wind-flowers
Can never make you fly:
I twist them in a crown today,
And tonight they die.

*

Where innocent bright-eyed daisies are,
With blades of grass between,
Each daisy stands up like a star
Out of a sky of green.

*

If hope grew on a bush,
And joy grew on a tree,
What a nosegay for the plucking
There would be!

But, oh, in windy autumn,
When frail flowers wither,
What should we do for hope and joy,
Fading together?

*

The wind has such a rainy sound
Moaning through the town,
The sea has such a windy sound,—
Will the ships go down?

The apples in the orchard
Tumble from their tree—
Oh, will the ships go down, go down,
In the windy sea?

*

I planted a hand
And there came up a palm,
I planted a heart
And there came up balm.

Then I planted a wish,
And there sprang a thorn,
While heaven frowned with thunder
And earth sighed forlorn.

*

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads
  The wind is passing by.

*

The lily has a smooth stalk,
  Will never hurt your hand;
But the rose upon her briar
  Is lady of the land.

There's sweetness in an apple tree,
  And profit in the corn;
But lady of all beauty
  Is a rose upon a thorn.

When with moss and honey
  She tips her bending briar,
And half unfolds her glowing heart,
  She sets the world on fire.

*

When a mounting skylark sings
  In the sunlit summer morn,
I know that heaven is up on high,
  And on earth are fields of corn.

But when a nightingale sings
  In the moonlit summer even,
I know not if earth is merely earth,
  Only that heaven is heaven.

ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night;
  Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
  As sunlight on a stream;
    Come back in tears,
O memory, hope and love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter-sweet,
  Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brim-full of love abide and meet;
  Where thirsting longing eyes
    Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
  My very life again though cold in death;
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
  Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
    Speak low, lean low,
As long ago my love, how long ago.

TWICE

I took my heart in my hand
  (O my love, O my love),
I said: Let me fall or stand.
  Let me live or die,
But this once hear me speak
  (O my love, O my love)—
Yet a woman's words are weak;
  You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
  With a friendly smile,
With a critical eye you scanned,
  Then set it down,
And said, "It is still unripe,
  Better wait awhile;
Wait while the skylarks pipe,
  Till the corn grows brown."

As you set it down it broke—
  Broke, but I did not wince;
I smiled at the speech you spoke,
  At your judgment I heard;
But I have not often smiled
  Since then, nor questioned since,
Nor cared for cornflowers wild,
  Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand,
O my God, O my God,
My broken heart in my hand:
Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,
O my God, O my God:
Now let thy judgment stand—
Yea judge me now.

This, contemned of a man,
This, marred one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
Both within and without:
Refine with fire its gold,
Purge Thou its dross away—
Yea hold it in Thy hold,
Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand—
I shall not die but live—
Before thy face I stand;
I, for Thou callest such:
All that I have I bring
All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.

PASSING AWAY

Passing away, saith the World, passing away:
Chances, beauty and youth sapped day by day:
Thy life never continueth in one stay.
Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to gray
That hath won neither laurel nor bay?
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:
Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay
On my bosom for aye.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away:
With its burden of fear and hope, of labor and play;

Hearken what the past doth witness and say:
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day
Lo, the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay:
Watch thou and pray.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away:
Winter passeth after the long delay:
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.
Though I tarry wait for Me, trust Me, watch and pray.
Arise, come away, night is past, and lo it is day,
My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear Me say.
Then I answered: Yea.

MARVEL OF MARVELS

Marvel of marvels, if I myself shall behold
With mine own eyes my King in His city of gold;
Where the least of lambs is spotless white in the fold,
Where the least and last of saints in spotless white is stoled,
Where the dimmest head beyond a moon is aureoled.
O saints, my beloved, now moldering to mold in the mold,
Shall I see you lift your heads, see your cerements unrolled,
See with these very eyes? who now in darkness and cold
Tremble for the midnight cry, the rapture, the tale untold,—
The Bridegroom cometh, cometh, His Bride to enfold!

Cold it is, my beloved, since your funeral bell was tolled:
Cold it is, O my King, how cold alone on the wold!

THE WORLD

By day she woos me, soft, exceeding fair:
  But all night as the moon so changeth she;
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.

By day she woos me to the outer air,
  Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
  But through the night, a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands
  In all the naked horror of the truth
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed, that I should sell
  My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

In the bleak mid-winter
  Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
  Water like stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
  Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
  Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
  Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
  When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
  A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
  Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
  Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
  And a manger full of hay;
Enough for Him whom angels
  Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
  Which adore.

Angels and archangels
  May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
  Throng'd the air
But only His mother
  In her maiden bliss
Worshiped her Beloved
  With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
  Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
  I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
  I would do my part,—
Yet what I can I give Him,
  Give my heart.

FROM HOUSE TO HOME

. . . . . .

I have no words to tell what way we walked,
  What unforgotten path now closed and sealed;
I have no words to tell all things we talked,
  All things that he revealed:

This only can I tell: that hour by hour
  I waxed more feastful, lifted up and glad;
I felt no thorn-prick when I plucked a flower,
  Felt not my friend was sad.

"Tomorrow," once I said to him with smiles:
  "Tonight," he answered gravely and was dumb.
But pointed out the stones that numbered miles
  And miles and miles to come.

"Not so," I said: "Tomorrow shall be sweet;
  Tonight is not so sweet as coming days."
Then first I saw that he had turned his feet,
  Had turned from me his face:

Running and flying miles and miles he went,
  But once looked back to beckon with his hand
And cry: "Come home, O love, from banishment:
  Come to the distant land."

That night destroyed me like an avalanche;
  One night turned all my summer back to snow:
Next morning not a bird upon my branch,
  Not a lamb woke below,—

No bird, no lamb, no living breathing thing;
  No squirrel scampered on my breezy lawn,
No mouse lodged by his hoard: all joys took wing
  And fled before that dawn.

Azure and sun were starved from heaven above,
  No dew had fallen, biting frost lay hoar:
O love, I knew that I should meet my love,
  Should find my love no more.

"My love no more," I muttered stunned with pain:
  I shed no tear, I wrung no passionate hand,
Till something whispered: "You shall meet again,
  Meet in a distant land."

Then with a cry like famine I arose,
  I lit my candle, searched from room to room,
Searched up and down; a war of winds that froze
  Swept through the blank of gloom.

I searched day after day, night after night;
  Scant change there came to me of night or day:
"No more," I wailed, "no more": and trimmed my light,
  And gnashed but did not pray,

Until my heart broke and my spirit broke:
  Upon the frost-bound floor I stumbled, fell,
And moaned: "It is enough: withhold the stroke.
  Farewell, O love, farewell."

Then life swooned from me. And I heard the song
  Of spheres and spirits rejoicing over me:
One cried: "Our sister, she hath suffered long."—
  One answered: "Make her see."—

One cried: "Oh, blessed she who no more pain,
  Who no more disappointment shall receive."—
One answered: "Not so: she must live again;
  Strengthen thou her to live."

So while I lay entranced a curtain seemed
  To shrivel with crackling from before my face;
Across mine eyes a waxing radiance beamed
  And showed a certain place.

I saw a vision of a woman, where
  Night and new morning strive for domination;
Incomparably pale, and almost fair,
  And sad beyond expression.

Her eyes were like some fire-enshrining gem,
  Were stately like the stars, and yet were tender;
Her figure charmed me like a windy stem
  Quivering and drooped and slender.

I stood upon the outer barren ground,
  She stood on inner ground that budded flowers;
While circling in their never-slackening round
  Danced by the mystic hours.

But every flower was lifted on a thorn,
  And every thorn shot upright from its sands
To gall her feet; hoarse laughter pealed in scorn
  With cruel clapping hands.

She bled and wept, yet did not shrink: her strength
  Was strung up until daybreak of delight:
She measured measureless sorrow toward its length,
  And breadth, and depth and height.

Then marked I how a chain sustained her form,
A chain of living links not made nor riven:
It stretched sheer up through lightning, wind, and storm,
And anchored fast in heaven.

One cried: "How long? yet founded on the Rock
She shall do battle, suffer, and attain."—
One answered: "Faith quakes in the tempest shock:
Strengthen her soul again."

I saw a cup sent down and come to her
Brimfull of loathing and of bitterness:
She drank with livid lips that seemed to stir
The depth, not make it less.

But as she drank I spied a hand distill
New wine and virgin honey; making it
First bitter-sweet, then sweet indeed, until
She tasted only sweet.

Her lips and cheeks waxed rosy-fresh and young;
Drinking she sang: "My soul shall nothing want";
And drank anew: while soft a song was sung,
A mystical slow chant.

One cried: "The wounds are faithful of a friend:
The wilderness shall blossom as a rose."
One answered: "Rend the veil, declare the end,
Strengthen her ere she goes."

Then earth and heaven were rolled up like a scroll;
Time, space, and change and death, had passed away;
Weight, number, measure, each had reached its whole;
The day had come, that day.

Multitudes—multitudes—stood up in bliss,
Made equal to the angels, glorious, fair;
With harps, palms, wedding-garments, kiss of peace
And crowned and haloed hair.

They sang a song, a new song in the height,
Harping with harps to Him Who is Strong and True:
They drank new wine, their eyes saw with new light,
Lo, all things were made new.

Tier beyond tier they rose and rose and rose
So high that it was dreadful, flames with flames:
No man could number them, no tongue disclose
Their secret sacred names.

As though one pulse stirred all, one rush of blood
Fed all, one breath swept through them myriad-voiced,
They struck their harps, cast down their crowns, they stood
And worshiped and rejoiced.

Each face looked one way like a moon new-lit,
Each face looked one way towards its Sun of Love;
Drank love and bathed in love and mirrored it
And knew no end thereof.

Glory touched glory on each blessèd head,
Hands locked dear hands never to sunder more:
These were the new-begotten from the dead
Whom the great birthday bore.

Heart answered heart, soul answered soul at rest,
Double against each other, filled, sufficed:
All loving, loved of all; but loving best
And best beloved of Christ.

I saw that one who lost her love in pain,
Who trod on thorns, who drank the loathsome cup,
The lost in night, in day was found again;
The fallen was lifted up.

They stood together in the blessed noon,
They sang together through the length of days;
Each loving face bent sunwards like a moon
New-lit with love and praise.

Therefore, O friend, I would not if I might
Rebuild my house of lies, wherein I joyed
One time to dwell: my soul shall walk in white,
Cast down but not destroyed.

Therefore in patience I possess my soul;
Yea, therefore as a flint I set my face,
To pluck down, to build up again the whole—
But in a distant place.

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on them;
This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it sweet:
My face is steadfast toward Jerusalem,
My heart remembers it.

I lift the hanging hands, the feeble knees—
I, precious more than seven times molten gold—
Until the day when from His storehouses
God shall bring new and old;

Beauty for ashes, oil of joy for grief,
Garment of praise for spirit of heaviness:
Although today I fade as doth a leaf,
I languish and grow less.

Although today He prunes my twigs with pain,
Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root:
Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again
And clothe myself with fruit.

Although today I walk in tedious ways,
Today His staff is turned into a rod,
Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
And stay upon my God.

T. E. BROWN

Thomas Edward Brown was born May 5, 1830, at Douglas, in the Isle of Man, where his father was vicar at St. Matthew's Church. The family was poor and when the boy went to Christchurch, Oxford, he had to earn his way as a servitor. Here, at twenty-three, he took the coveted "Double First," but his servitor-

ship was considered a bar to his election as Senior Student, the time being "one of the most intensely miserable I was ever called to endure." The year following, however, he attained "the summit of an Oxford man's ambition" and was elected Fellow of Oriel. Shortly after he was ordained deacon but "never took kindly to the life." Instead he became a schoolmaster at his old school on the Isle of Man; at Gloucester where, though unhappy, he taught and influenced the young W. E. Henley; and at Clifton College where he spent twenty-eight years, raising the inconspicuous private institution to one of the most important schools in England.

During his career as schoolmaster Brown had been writing quietly—*ohne Hast, ohne Rast*—verse of a singularly salty character. His labors as educator dissipated much of his creative energy and when he was offered the Archdeaconry of the Isle of Man, he refused, saying, "I need absolute freedom, freedom to go to church or not to go to church, freedom to commune with local preachers and occasionally to attend Methodist chapels, freedom to smoke a pipe in a Manx public-house, freedom to absent myself from church conferences and ruridecanal potterings—in short, absolute freedom." High-spirited, running the scale from burlesque to pathos ("I was a born sobber"), equally rich in love and humor, he could find no fuller outlet than his verse.

Although he had written much and printed a little, it was not until 1873 (in his forty-third year) that his first book was published. *Betty Lee, a Fo'c's'le Yarn* was republished with several other narratives as *Fo'c's'le Yarns* (1881), which latter work went through several editions. This was followed by three other volumes, all assembled a few years after his death—which occurred October 29, 1897—in *The Collected Poems of T. E. Brown* (1900), Henley supplying an Introduction to the edition of 1901. A popular *Poems of T. E. Brown* with a valuable biographical preface by H. F. B. first appeared in 1908 and has often been reprinted.

The bulk of Brown's poetry is not large nor is all of it important. His tales are diffuse, although some (particularly "Mary Quayle") anticipate the rude strength of Masefield; his finest narratives are in the Manx dialect which, though lovingly used, is too local to win large audiences. The most interesting features of his *Fo'c's'le Yarns* are their technical irregularities and the identification of the character Tom Baynes with (Tom) Brown—"when I am alone I think and speak to myself always as Tom Baynes."

But Brown is most characteristic and most himself in his lyrics. Here in that rhythmically "heightened prose" which is presumably a discovery of the twentieth century, he transmits a talk-tinctured verse, which is free in idiom, fresh in accent. His editor H. F. B. notes the vein of "quaintness" which permeates his work, and calls

attention to a likeness with George Herbert, a comparison justified by stanzas like:

> Poor souls whose god is Mammon—
> Meanwhile, from ocean's gate,
> Keen for the foaming spate,
> The true God rushes in the salmon.

"The emotion," says A. T. Quiller-Couch, "while almost equally explosive in mirth and in tears, remains an educated emotion, disciplined by a scholar's sense of language." While this conclusion is apt enough, it is only partially true. Brown's language was not always scholarly; his best passages have a tone of voice not to be found in libraries but in the homely fields that Brown loved to frequent. The charm of his verse lies not so much in his intuitive philosophy nor even in the unspectacular audacity of his fancy but in the unexpectedness of his speech. It is this spontaneity, this personal warmth—manifest not only in the much-quoted "Vespers" without which no anthology can face a reader, but in the little known "Disguises" and "An Autumn Trinket"—that makes Brown more modern than many a self-declared "modernist." Never a major poet, he will always be a delight for those who relish the touch of difference which is the test of discovery.

I BENDED UNTO ME

I bended unto me a bough of May,
That I might see and smell:
It bore it in a sort of way,
It bore it very well.
But when I let it backward sway,
Then it were hard to tell
With what a toss, with what a swing,
The dainty thing
Resumed its proper level,
And sent me to the devil.
I know it did—you doubt it?
I turned, and saw them whispering about it.

VESPERS

O blackbird, what a boy you are!
How you do go it!
Blowing your bugle to that one sweet star—
How you do blow it!

And does she hear you, blackbird boy, so far?
Or is it wasted breath?
"Good Lord! she is so bright
Tonight!"
The blackbird saith.

PER OMNIA DEUS

What moves at Cardiff, how a man
At Newport ends the day as he began,
At Weston what adventure may befall,
What Bristol dreams, or if she dream at all,
Upon the pier, with step sedate,
I meditate—
Poor souls! whose God is Mammon—
Meanwhile, from Ocean's gate,
Keen for the foaming spate,
The true God rushes in the salmon.

DISGUISES

High stretched upon the swinging yard,
I gather in the sheet;
But it is hard
And stiff, and one cries haste.
Then He that is most dear in my regard
Of all the crew gives aidance meet;
But from His hands, and from His feet,
A glory spreads wherewith the night is starred:
Moreover of a cup most bitter-sweet
With fragrance as of nard,
And myrrh, and cassia spiced,
He proffers me to taste.
Then I to Him:—"Art Thou the Christ?"
He saith—"Thou say'st."

Like to an ox
That staggers 'neath the mortal blow,
She grinds upon the rocks;—
Then straight and low
Leaps forth the leveled line, and in our quarter locks.

The cradle's rigged; with swerving of the blast
We go,
Our Captain last—
Demands
"Who fired that shot?" Each silent stands—
Ah, sweet perplexity!
This too was He.

I have an arbor wherein came a toad
Most hideous to see—
Immediate, seizing staff or goad,
I smote it cruelly.
Then all the place with subtle radiance glowed—
I looked, and it was He!

DORA

She knelt upon her brother's grave,
  My little girl of six years old—
He used to be so good and brave,
  The sweetest lamb of all our fold;
He used to shout, he used to sing,
Of all our tribe the little king—
And so unto the turf her ear she laid,
To hark if still in that dark place he play'd.
    No sound! no sound!
    Death's silence was profound;
    And horror crept
    Into her aching heart, and Dora wept.
    If this is as it ought to be,
    My God, I leave it unto Thee.

JUVENTA PERENNIS

If youth be thine,
Spare not to drink its wine;
If youth be fled,
    Hold up
    The golden cup—
God's grapes are always red.

AN AUTUMN TRINKET

Why does she burn
These colors on my soul—where'er I turn,
Splashes of flame and pyramids of fire
That fill me with insatiate desire,
Making me yearn
For that which, with its own intensity
Death-poisoned, hastens not to be?

Even so, even so
It is—the brightest and the dearest go:
The thrift of our great Mother calling back
Her forces, that the Spring may have no lack
Of customed show.
Not less to us the things that most we cherish
Fade from our eyes, and perish, perish, perish!

MY GARDEN

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! In gardens! When the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

THE SCHOONER

Just mark that schooner westward far at sea—
'Tis but an hour ago
When she was lying boggish at the quay,
And men ran to and fro,
And tugged, and stamped, and shoved, and pushed, and swore,
And ever and anon, with crapulous glee,
Grinned homage to viragoes on the shore.

So to the jetty gradual she was hauled:
  Then one the tiller took,
And chewed, and spat upon his hand, and bawled;
  And one the canvas shook
Forth like a moldy bat; and one, with nods
And smiles, lay on the bowsprit-end, and called
And cursed the Harbor-master by his gods.

And, rotten from the gunwale to the keel,
  Rat-riddled, bilge-bestank,
Slime-slobbered, horrible, I saw her reel,
  And drag her oozy flank,
And sprawl among the deft young waves, that laughed,
And leapt, and turned in many a sportive wheel,
As she thumped onward with her lumbering draught.

And now, behold! a shadow of repose
  Upon a line of gray,
She sleeps, that transverse cuts the evening rose—
  She sleeps, and dreams away,
Soft-blended in a unity of rest
All jars, and strifes obscene, and turbulent throes
'Neath the broad benediction of the West—

Sleeps; and methinks she changes as she sleeps,
  And dies, and is a spirit pure.
Lo! on her deck an angel pilot keeps
  His lonely watch secure;
And at the entrance of Heaven's dockyard waits,
Till from Night's leash the fine-breath'd morning leaps,
And that strong hand within unbars the gates.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

Walter Theodore Watts was born at St. Ives, Huntington, October 12, 1832; sixty-five years later he added his mother's name (Dunton) to his own. Planning to be a naturalist, he spent much time roaming in East Anglia, studying gypsy customs and becoming intimately acquainted with George Borrow whose *Lavengro* (1893) and *Romany Rye* (1903) he edited. He turned from natu-

ral history to law, which after some years, he practically abandoned for literature. His reviews appearing regularly in *The Athenaeum* were followed with interest and his contributions to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*—especially his fundamental article on "Poetry"—established his reputation as a critic. His friendships were notable. He was close to Tennyson, an intimate of Rossetti, and Swinburne's *fidus Achates* for almost thirty years, providing a home and caring for the erratic poet from 1879 to the latter's death in 1909.

Although Watts-Dunton had written continuously since his youth, his first book, *The Coming of Love* (1897), was not published until he was well over sixty. *Aylwin*, a romance, appeared the year following. Both volumes—one in verse, the other in prose—are Welsh in character and background, expressing a highly romantic conception of gypsy-life in the manner of Borrow. This glamour-seeking instinct led him to publish, in his seventieth year, a long defense or rather a glorification of the romantic movement, *The Renascence of Wonder* (1903). The phrase, "the renascence of wonder," Watts-Dunton explained, "merely indicates that there are two great impulses governing man, and probably not man only, but the entire world of conscious life: the impulse of acceptance—the impulse to take unchallenged and for granted all the phenomena of the outer world as they are—and the impulse to confront these phenomena with eyes of inquiry and wonder."

Watts-Dunton's was distinctly a study in deferred development. He married in 1905. His *Studies in Shakespeare*, published in 1910, when he was almost eighty, are pale besides Swinburne's, but remain something more than a set of scholarly essays. He died in London, June 6, 1914.

Although *The Coming of Love* contains more ambitious poems, the chorus which opens "Christmas at the 'Mermaid'" is Watts-Dunton's finest movement. Swinburne, with his usual enthusiasm, described the entire work as "a great lyrical epic" and Thomas Hardy, more cautious about the piece as a whole, enjoyed it sufficiently to write, "The absence of Shakespeare strikes me as being one of the finest touches of the poem: it thaws one into a 'humorous melancholy'—and we feel him, in some curious way, more than if he had been there." The subject, traditionally English, offers countless opportunities for a light opera swagger, opportunities which neither Watts-Dunton nor (a generation later) Alfred Noyes neglected. Nevertheless, the words are no less enjoyable for being anticipated nor the tune less popular for being a familiar one.

WASSAIL CHORUS[1]

(*From "Christmas at the 'Mermaid'"*)

Chorus

Christmas knows a merry, merry place,
Where he goes with fondest face,
Brightest eye, brightest hair:
Tell the Mermaid where is that one place:
Where?

Raleigh

'Tis by Devon's glorious halls,
Whence, dear Ben, I come again:
Bright with golden roofs and walls—
El Dorado's rare domain—
Seem those halls when sunlight launches
Shafts of gold through leafless branches,
Where the winter's feathery mantle blanches
Field and farm and lane.

Chorus

Christmas knows a merry, merry place, *etc.*

Drayton

'Tis where Avon's wood-sprites weave
Through the boughs a lace of rime,
While the bells of Christmas Eve
Fling for Will the Stratford-chime
O'er the river-flags embossed
Rich with flowery runes of frost—
O'er the meads where snowy tufts are tossed—
Strains of olden time.

Chorus

Christmas knows a merry, merry place, *etc.*

[1] It is interesting to read these verses in connection with Alfred Noyes' treatment of the same theme in the latter's *Tales from the Mermaid Tavern.*

Shakespeare's Friend

'Tis, methinks, on any ground
Where our Shakespeare's feet are set,
There smiles Christmas, holly-crowned
With his blithest coronet:
Friendship's face he loveth well:
'Tis a countenance whose spell
Sheds a balm o'er every mead and dell
Where we used to fret.

Chorus

Christmas knows a merry, merry place, *etc.*

Heywood

More than all the pictures, Ben,
Winter weaves by wood or stream,
Christmas loves our London when
Rise thy clouds of wassail-steam—
Clouds like these, that, curling, take
Forms of faces gone, and wake
Many a lay from lips we loved, and make
London like a dream.

Chorus

Christmas knows a merry, merry place, *etc.*

Ben Jonson

Love's old songs shall never die,
Yet the new shall suffer proof;
Love's old drink of Yule brew I,
Wassail for new love's behoof;
Drink the drink I brew, and sing
Till the berried branches swing,
Till our song make all the Mermaid ring—
Yea, from rush to roof.

Chorus

Christmas loves this merry, merry place:—
Christmas saith with fondest face
Brightest eye, brightest hair:
Ben! the drink tastes rare of sack and mace:
Rare!

LEWIS CARROLL

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was born in the village of Daresbury, Cheshire, January 27, 1832. He entered Christchurch College at nineteen, was made Master of the House at twenty-four, became a Deacon in Holy Orders at thirty. His first books published under his own name were not only serious but mathematical: *A Syllabus of Plane Algebraical Geometry* (1860) and *The Formulae of Plane Trigonometry* (1861). As the author of such grave works Dodgson did not wish his name familiarized as an entertainer of children, so when *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was published in 1865, it appeared under the *nom-de-plume* of "Lewis Carroll."

Alice in Wonderland (originally entitled *Alice's Adventures Underground*) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) are immortal though relished far more by sophisticated maturity than by the children to whom the works are presented as "appropriate" gift-books. So with *Rhyme? and Reason?* (1883), which contains that triumph of the absurd, "The Hunting of the Snark" and the madcap *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889-1893). Here the Comic Spirit is a carefully adult one, not the inconsequential Punch-and-Judy dear to childhood. Dodgson's passions were divided between occasional preaching, the continual making of puzzles and the propounding of mathematical problems. Parallel with the "Lewis Carroll" series he preoccupied himself by writing a succession of mathematical books until his death at Guildsford, January 14, 1898. To the last he refused to be identified with his pseudonym. Though it was generally known that he wrote the "Alice" books, he continually evaded the responsibility of authorship saying, "Mr. Dodgson neither claimed nor acknowledged any connection with the books not published under his name."

"Dodgson's life," writes Eleanor Farjeon, "was in his work, and he produced indefatigably a quantity of books in which nonsensical and logical minds were so balanced that those on logic could not help being nonsensical, while his nonsense was irrepressibly logical. . . . He leaves the impression of a man who inhabited a

slightly unreal world—and oddly enough, a world not of imagination, but of ingenuity. Even in his happiest work his genius was inventive rather than creative; and in all he did and thought there is a sense of arrangement, as though most of the affairs of life could be conducted delightfully through a series of games and tricks. The figure he cuts in Victorian annals is something that of a whimsical monk of the Middle Ages."

But while this résumé may be true of the man and his style, it is far from true of his characters. Alice has become a national heroine; The Mad Hatter is a recognizable neighbor; the Duchess, the Walrus and the Carpenter, even the Jabberwocky have lives—and evidently deathless ones—vividly their own. Even the absurdly logical words—"chortle" and "burble" for example—have ceased to be nonsense and have become part of our vocabulary.

JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
  Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
  And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
  The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
  The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
  Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
  And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
  The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
  And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
  The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
  He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

The sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might:
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright—
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
After the day was done—
"It's very rude of him," she said,
"To come and spoil the fun!"

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud because
No cloud was in the sky:
No birds were flying overhead—
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand:
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand:
"If this were only cleared away,"
They said, "it *would* be grand!"

"If seven maids with seven mops
  Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose," the Walrus said,
  "That they could get it clear?"
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,
  And shed a bitter tear.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"
  The Walrus did beseech.
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
  Along the briny beach:
We cannot do with more than four,
  To give a hand to each."

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
  But never a word he said;
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
  And shook his heavy head—
Meaning to say he did not choose
  To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,
  All eager for the treat:
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
  Their shoes were clean and neat.
And this was odd, because, you know,
  They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,
  And yet another four;
And thick and fast they came at last,
  And more and more and more—
All hopping through the frothy waves,
  And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
  Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
  Conveniently low:
And all the little Oysters stood
  And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings."

"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,
"Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat!"
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.

"A loaf of bread," the Walrus said,
"Is what we chiefly need:
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good indeed—
Now, if you're ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed."

"But not on us!" the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
"After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do!"
"The night is fine," the Walrus said,
"Do you admire the view?

"It was so kind of you to come!
And you are very nice!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"Cut us another slice.
I wish you were not quite so deaf—
I've had to ask you twice!"

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,
"To play them such a trick.
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"The butter's spread too thick!"

"I weep for you," the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize."
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,
"You've had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again?"
But answer came there none—
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd eaten every one.

THE CROCODILE

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in,
With gently smiling jaws!

FATHER WILLIAM

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment—one shilling the box—
Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak—
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
Said his father. "Don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you down-stairs!"

METAMORPHOSES

(*From "Sylvie and Bruno"*)

He thought he saw an Elephant,
That practiced on a fife:
He looked again and found it was
A letter from his wife.
"At length I realize," he said,
"The bitterness of life!"

He thought he saw a Buffalo
Upon the chimney-piece:
He looked again, and found it was
His Sister's Husband's Niece.
"Unless you leave this house," he said,
"I'll send for the Police!"

He thought he saw a Rattlesnake
That questioned him in Greek:
He looked again, and found it was
The Middle of Next Week.
"The one thing I regret," he said,
"Is that it cannot speak!"

He thought he saw a Banker's Clerk
Descending from the 'Bus:
He looked again, and found it was
A Hippopotamus.
"If this should stay to dine," he said,
"There won't be much for us!"

He thought he saw a Coach-and-Four
That stood beside his bed:
He looked again, and found it was
A Bear without a Head.
"Poor thing," he said, "poor silly thing!
It's waiting to be fed!"

He thought he saw an Albatross
That fluttered round the lamp:
He looked again and found it was
A Penny-Postage-Stamp.
"You'd best be getting home," he said:
"The nights are very damp!"

He thought he saw a Garden Door
That opened with a key:
He looked again, and found it was
A Double-Rule-of-Three:
"And all its mystery," he said,
"Is clear as day to me!"

THE BAKER'S TALE

(*From "The Hunting of the Snark"*)

They roused him with muffins—they roused him with ice—
  They roused him with mustard and cress—
They roused him with jam and judicious advice—
  They set him conundrums to guess.

When at length he sat up and was able to speak,
  His sad story he offered to tell;
And the Bellman cried, "Silence! Not even a shriek!"
  And excitedly tingled his bell.

There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream,
  Scarcely even a howl or a groan,
As the man they called "Ho!" told his story of woe
  In an antediluvian tone.

"My father and mother were honest, though poor—"
  "Skip all that!" cried the Bellman in haste.
"If it once becomes dark, there's no chance of a Snark—
  We have hardly a minute to waste!"

"I skip forty years," said the Baker, in tears,
  "And proceed without further remark
To the day when you took me aboard of your ship
  To help you in hunting the Snark.

"A dear uncle of mine (after whom I was named)
  Remarked when I bade him farewell—"
"Oh, skip your dear uncle!" the Bellman exclaimed,
  As he angrily tingled his bell.

"He remarked to me then," said the mildest of men,
  "If your Snark be a Snark, that is right:
"Fetch it home by all means—you may serve it with greens
  And it's handy for striking a light.

"You may seek it with thimbles, and seek it with care;
  You may hunt it with forks and hope;
You may threaten its life with a railway-share;
  You may charm it with smiles and soap—"

("That's exactly the method," the Bellman bold
In a hasty parenthesis cried,
"That's exactly the way I have always been told
That the capture of Snarks should be tried!")

"But oh, beamish nephew, beware of the day,
If your Snark be a Boojum! For then
You will softly and suddenly vanish away
And never be met with again!

"It is this, it is this that oppresses my soul,
When I think of my uncle's last words:
And my heart is like nothing so much as a bowl
Brimming over with quivering curds!

"It is this, it is this—" "We have had that before!"
The Bellman indignantly said.
And the Baker replied, "Let me say it once more.
It is this, it is this that I dread!

"I engage with the Snark—every night after dark—
In a dreamy delirious fight;
I serve it with greens in those shadowy scenes,
And I use it for striking a light:

"But if ever I meet with a Boojum, that day,
In a moment (of this I am sure),
I shall softly and suddenly vanish away—
And the notion I cannot endure!"

WILLIAM MORRIS

William Morris, poet and artisan, was born at Walthamstow, March 24, 1834. The mercantile strain inherited from his grandfather, a prosperous tradesman in Worcester, stood him in good stead when he turned craftsman and set up his own shop. In youth, however, he was concerned only with literature; a precocious reader, it is said that he had read most of the Waverley novels at the age of four. Through such romances he steeped himself in a literary *moyen âge* which was to dominate him in maturity. A significant diversion of his childhood was his riding about Epping

Forest at the age of six—when the chimney-factories were invading the countryside—in a toy suit of armor. He was educated in neighboring schools, matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1852 and, while at college, formed a friendship with Edward Burne-Jones that was to last all his life. Their mutual passions were medieval literature, ecclesiastical art, and theological history. For a while they considered taking holy orders, but, with a large if vague social reform in mind, Morris turned to architecture and Burne-Jones to painting.

Four years later Morris, not content with work in an architect's office, founded *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine,* which, though it died within a year, brought him into close contact with Dante Gabriel Rossetti who convinced him that painting was the only occupation for a man of his talents. So, forsaking letters and blue prints for the nonce, Morris planted himself in front of canvases and on scaffoldings intent on realizing his dream of an up-to-date medievalism. But the poet was not to be so lightly extinguished. In 1858 he published *The Defense of Guenevere,* a long poem as different from Malory's treatment of the theme as it was from Tennyson's. It attracted little attention, and four years later, after furnishing his own home entirely with his own hands, Morris formed a company to supply not only interior decorations but household utensils of every kind, embodying guild principles and "guild conscience." Such was Morris's first enterprise directed against factory products and the quick-growing, mechanical ugliness of his day. This opposition to a machine-mad age expressed itself directly in his hand-made products and his social protests, indirectly in his poetry which turned back to what—to Morris at least—were larger issues and more spacious times. *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870), *Love is Enough* (1872) announce and elaborate a theme of epic grandeur, the triumph of the imagination over stubborn material.

Having found his métier, Morris's energies, never long repressed, found new and varied outlets. Incited by a trip to Iceland, he began work on the Icelandic sagas—*Sigurd the Volsung* appeared in 1876. He finished a characteristic if inexact translation of the *Aeneid.* Becoming more concerned with economic determinism, he wrote the idealistic *News from Nowhere* (1891), *A Dream of John Ball* and the still-popular *Chants for Socialists.* When his pronouncements were considered not sufficiently "advanced," he drifted away from the movement and back to more subtle ways of educating the public.

Before 1890 Morris had established his reputation as a designer and manufacturer of tapestries in the old spirit, as an illuminator of manuscripts, and as the best of contemporary typographers.

The Kelmscott Press was his creation and the darling of his later years, his last labor, which took five years to perfect, being the almost priceless Kelmscott Chaucer. He refused the laureateship offered him after the death of Tennyson, pleading that he was "too remote from the requirements of a court," but really fearing that his taste and the public's were too wide apart. He died October 3, 1896.

The importance of Morris has dwindled perceptibly; his influence remains. It is indisputable that his medievalism was a sentimental one, that as "the idle singer of an empty day" he enjoyed championing a lost cause. It is also true that his verse is muffled with too much tapestry and confused with the clash of too many arms. But one must remember the decorous dullness from which Morris reacted. He brought color into a gray and prosy world, reviving a feeling for handicraft which extends to our own time. Most of all he put vigor and a sharpened if spasmodic urgency into the thinning blood of English esthetism. His poetry lacks final authority because Morris himself could not adjust to any prolonged reality; it can never appeal profoundly to a large portion of mankind, since, for all his propaganda, Morris was more interested in the things he handled than the men he wanted to uplift. He loved humanity in the abstract; the individual—his poetry betrays it—was strange and somewhat repellent. Life to him was something to be found in a tapestry-hung library furnished with exquisitely printed books, or riding through a blossom-shedding wood, following the gleam in a suit of toy armor. But underneath the outworn trappings the soul was knightly and real.

LOVE IS ENOUGH

Love is enough: though the World be a-waning,
And the woods have no voice but the voice of complaining,
  Though the skies be too dark for dim eyes to discover
The gold-cups and daisies fair blooming thereunder,
Though the hills be held shadows, and the sea a dark wonder,
  And this day draw a veil over all deeds pass'd over,
Yet their hands shall not tremble, their feet shall not falter:
The void shall not weary, the fear shall not alter
  These lips and these eyes of the loved and the lover.

THE GILLIFLOWER OF GOLD

A golden gilliflower today
I wore upon my helm alway

And won the prize of this tourney
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

However well Sir Giles might sit,
His sun was weak to wither it,
Lord Miles's blood was dew on it:
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Although my spear in splinters flew,
From John's steel-coat my eye was true;
I wheel'd about and cried for you,
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Yea, do not doubt my heart was good,
Though my sword flew like rotten wood,
To shout, although I scarcely stood,
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

My hand was steady too, to take
My ax from round my neck, and break
John's steel-coat up for my love's sake.
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

When I stood in my tent again
Arming afresh I felt a pain
Take hold of me, I was so fain—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

To hear: *"Honneur aux fils des preux!"*
Right in my ears again, and shew
The gilliflower blossom'd anew.
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

The Sieur Guillaume against me came,
His tabard bore three points of flame
From a red heart: with little blame—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Our tough spears crackled up like straw;
He was the first to turn and draw
His sword that had nor speck nor flaw,—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

But I felt weaker than a maid,
And my brain, dizzied and afraid,
Within my helm a fierce tune play'd,—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Until I thought of your dear head,
Bow'd to the gilliflower bed,
The yellow flowers stain'd with red;—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Crash! how the swords met, "*giroflée!*"
The fierce tune in my helm would play,
"*La belle! la belle! jaune giroflée!*"
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Once more the great swords met again,
"*La belle! la belle!* but who fell then?
Le Sieur Guillaume, who struck down ten;—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

And as with mazed and unarm'd face
Toward my own crown and the Queen's place,
They led me at a gentle pace—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

I almost saw your quiet head
Bow'd o'er the gilliflower bed,
The yellow flowers stain'd with red—
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

SHAMEFUL DEATH

There were four of us about that bed;
The mass-priest knelt at the side,
I and his mother stood at the head,
Over his feet lay the bride;
We were quite sure that he was dead,
Though his eyes were open wide.

He did not die in the night,
  He did not die in the day,
But in the morning twilight
  His spirit pass'd away,
When neither sun nor moon was bright,
  And the trees were merely gray.

He was not slain with the sword,
  Knight's ax, or the knightly spear,
Yet spoke he never a word
  After he came in here;
I cut away the cord
  From the neck of my brother dear.

He did not strike one blow,
  For the recreants came behind,
In a place where the hornbeams grow,
  A path right hard to find,
For the hornbeam boughs swing so
  That the twilight makes it blind.

They lighted a great torch then,
  When his arms were pinioned fast
Sir John the knight of the Fen,
  Sir Guy of the Dolorous Blast,
With knights threescore and ten,
  Hung brave Lord Hugh at last.

I am threescore and ten,
  And my hair is all turn'd gray,
But I met Sir John of the Fen
  Long ago on a summer day,
And am glad to think of the moment when
  I took his life away.

I am threescore and ten
  And my strength is mostly pass'd,
But long ago I and my men
  When the sky was overcast,
And the smoke roll'd over the reeds of the fen,
  Slew Guy of the Dolorous Blast.

And now, all knights of you,
I pray you pray for Sir Hugh,
A good knight and a true,
And for Alice, his wife, pray too.

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods?

Along the dripping leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splash'd wretchedly;
And the wet dripped from every tree
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair;
The tears and rain ran down her face.
By fits and starts they rode apace,
And very often was his place
Far off from her; he had to ride
Ahead to see what might betide
When the roads cross'd; and sometimes when
There rose a murmuring from his men,
Had to turn back with promises;
Ah me! she had but little ease;
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobb'd, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold,
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup: all for this
To part at last without a kiss
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they near'd that old soak'd hay,
They saw across the only way
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally
Grinn'd from his pennon, under which,
In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.
So then,
While Robert turn'd round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end,
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes; while Robert said:
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,
At Poictiers where we made them run
So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer.
Nought after this."
But, "O," she said,
"My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Chatelet;
The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by,
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last,
Would God that this next hour were past!"

He answer'd not but cried his cry,
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast
Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off—
Nay, keep thy tongue from gibe and scoff,
Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,
Then gazed upon her palm, as though
She thought her forehead bled, and—"No."
She said, and turn'd her head away,
As there were nothing else to say,
And everything were settled: red
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:
"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
My castle, guarding well my lands:
What hinders me from taking you,
And doing what I list to do
To your fair willful body, while
Your knight lies dead?"
A wicked smile
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
A long way out she thrust her chin:
"You know that I would strangle you
While you were sleeping; or bite through
Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she said,
"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
For in such wise they hem me in,
I cannot choose but sin and sin,
Whatever happens: yet I think
They could not make me eat or drink,
And so should I just reach my rest."
"Nay if you do not my behest,
O Jehane! though I love you well,"
Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
All that I know." "Foul lies," she said.
"Eh? lies my Jehane? by God's head,
At Paris folks would deem them true!
Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you,

'Jehane, the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown!'—
Eh—gag me, Robert!—sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end
For those long fingers and long feet,
And long neck and smooth shoulders sweet;
An end that few men would forget
That saw it—So, an hour yet:
Consider, Jehane, which to take
Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards: with her face
Turn'd upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay,
And fell asleep: and while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept
Round to the twelve again; but she
Being waked at last, sigh'd quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said:
"I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,
As though it hung on strong wires turn'd
Most sharply round and his face burn'd.
For Robert—both his eyes were dry,
He could not weep, but gloomily
He seemed to watch the rain; yea too,
His lips were firm; he tried once more
To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor gray lips, and now the hem
Of his sleeve brush'd them.

With a start
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
From Robert's throat he loosed the bands
Of silk and nail; with empty hands
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw,
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
Back Robert's head; she saw him send

The thin steel down; the blow told well,
Right backward the knight Robert fell,
And moan'd as dogs do, being half dead,
Unwitting, as I deem: so then
Godmar turned grinning to his men,
Who ran some five or six, and beat
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turn'd again and said:
"So Jehane, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way
Lies backward to the Chatelet!"
She shook her head and gazed awhile
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had
Beside the haystack in the floods.

JAMES THOMSON

James Thomson, who signed his work "B. V." to distinguish himself from the eighteenth century author of "The Seasons," was born at Port-Glasgow, in Renfrewshire, November 23, 1834. His life was unhappy from the beginning. His boyhood was spent in Orphan and Military asylums; his youth was passed as an Army schoolmaster among surroundings oppressive to his solitary nature. The sun broke through for a short period while he was stationed at a garrison near Cork, when he fell violently in love and was loved by the sergeant's daughter. Her death two years later plunged Thomson into a profound gloom from which he never emerged. It is significant that his first work (in 1858) was published under the pseudonym "Crepusculus." He was associated with and assisted by Charles Bradlaugh, but nobody and nothing could save him from himself. In 1862 he was dismissed from the Army. From 1866 to the time of his death—except for two brief intervals—he lived in a single room in the purlieus of London, suffering from insomnia and intemperance, increasing pessimism and dipsomania interacting upon each other. In 1872 he went to America as agent for a silver mine and discovered it to be fraudulent; in 1873 he went to Spain as war-correspondent for *The New York*

World and was prostrated by sun-stroke. Meanwhile he had produced several books, the most famous of which was that somber masterpiece, *The City of Dreadful Night*, which was published in 1880. *Vane's Story and Other Poems*, published in the same year and *Essays and Phantasies* (1881) did little to enhance his reputation. He sank back into the morbidity from which he had scarcely risen, died June 3, 1882, and was buried in unconsecrated ground.

Writing of Thomson, John Davidson (probably with self-identification) exceeded the excessive tributes of George Meredith and George Eliot, saying: "I think he was by nature endowed beyond any English poet of his time. There are no half measures with Nature. . . . Nature is the great spendthrift. She will burn up the world some day to attain what will probably seem to us a very inadequate end; and in order to have things stated at their worst, once for all, in English, she took a splendid genius and made him—an Army schoolmaster, starved his intellect, starved his heart, starved his body." Davidson's tribute is uncritically generous, but though Thomson's main work, *The City of Dreadful Night* suffers from unrelieved darkness and a very concentration of pessimism, no one can question its sincerity or imaginative strength. He wrote as one who had never experienced a noon, whose only season was a protracted and relentless winter, whose only hour was midnight, whose only food was want. Considering the facts of his life and their effects upon his temperament, it can be seen that this was no mere attitude, and the resulting poetry sounded a depth, a very abyss of self-confession. In this abyss where no light penetrated, he attempted to paint black on black, and almost succeeded in conveying a sense of cosmic hopelessness. In his vision monotony was stretched to infinite despair.

> If we could near them with the flight unflown,
> We should but find them worlds as sad as this,
> Or suns all self-consuming like our own
> Enringed by planet worlds as much amiss:
> They wax and wane through fusion and confusion;
> The spheres eternal are a grand illusion,
> The empyréan is a void abyss.

This is the keynote and cadence of his philosophy, which, though bitter, never becomes perverse. For him, the city is a projection of that Nothingness in which night and death held supreme court. Sun never visits this city and dawn glooms "in her tenebrous regard" because:

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;
That all is vanity and nothingness.

A few of Thomson's smaller verses have found their way into a few anthologies, but his lyrics are occasional and uncharacteristic. His sonorities require amplitude and reverberate in a kind of haunted space. One hears them best in passages like the denunciation of the city and the lamentation beginning:

As I came through the desert thus it was.

His heavily weighted stresses communicate nightmare depression, nowhere more effectively than in the description of the "Melancholia" which epitomized Thomson far more than Dürer.

"AS I CAME THROUGH THE DESERT"

(*From "The City of Dreadful Night"*)

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: All was black,
In heaven no single star, on earth no track;
A brooding hush without a stir or note,
The air so thick it clotted in my throat;
And thus for hours; then some enormous things
Swooped past with savage cries and clanking wings:
But I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert, thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Eyes of fire
Glared at me throbbing with a starved desire;
The hoarse and heavy and carnivorous breath
Was hot upon me from deep jaws of death;
Sharp claws, swift talons, fleshless fingers cold
Plucked at me from the bushes, tried to hold:
But I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Lo you, there,
That hillock burning with a brazen glare;
Those myriad dusky flames with points a-glow
Which writhed and hissed and darted to and fro;
A Sabbath of the Serpents, heaped pell-mell
For Devil's roll-call and some fête of Hell:
Yet I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Meteors ran
And crossed their javelins on the black sky-span;
The zenith opened to a gulf of flame,
The dreadful thunderbolts jarred earth's fixed frame:
The ground all heaved in waves of fire that surged
And weltered round me sole there unsubmerged:
Yet I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Air once more,
And I was close upon a wild sea-shore;
Enormous cliffs arose on either hand,
The deep tide thundered up a league-broad strand;
White foam-belts seethed there, wan spray swept and flew;
The sky broke, moon and stars and clouds and blue:
And I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: On the left
The sun arose and crowned a broad crag-cleft;
There stopped and burned out black, except a rim,
A bleeding eyeless socket, red and dim;
Whereon the moon fell suddenly south-west,
And stood above the right-hand cliffs at rest:
Still I stood on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: From the right
A shape came slowly with a ruddy light;
A woman with a red lamp in her hand,
Bareheaded and barefooted on that strand;
O desolation moving with such grace!
O anguish with such beauty in thy face.
I fell as on my bier,
Hope travailed with such fear.

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: I was twain,
Two selves distinct that cannot join again;
One stood apart and knew but could not stir,
And watched the other stark in swoon and her;
And she came on, and never turned aside,
Between such sun and moon and roaring tide:
And as she came more near
My soul grew mad with fear.

. . . . . .

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: When the tide
Swept up to her there kneeling by my side,
She clasped that corpse-like me, and they were borne
Away, and this vile me was left forlorn;
I know the whole sea cannot quench that heart,
Or cleanse that brow, or wash those two apart:
They love; their doom is drear,
Yet they nor hope nor fear;
But I, what do I here?

MELANCHOLIA

(*From "The City of Dreadful Night"*)

Anear the center of that northern crest
Stands out a level upland bleak and bare,
From which the city east and south and west
Sinks gentle in long waves; and thronèd there
An Image sits, stupendous, superhuman,
The bronze colossus of a wingèd woman,
Upon a graded granite base foursquare.

Low-seated she leans forward massively,
With cheek on clenched left hand, the forearm's might
Erect, its elbow on her rounded knee;
Across a clasped book in her lap the right
Upholds a pair of compasses; she gazes
With full set eyes but wandering in thick mazes
Of somber thought beholds no outward sight.

Words cannot picture her; but all men know
That solemn sketch the pure sad artist wrought
Three centuries and threescore years ago,
With phantasies of his peculiar thought:
The instruments of carpentry and science
Scattered about her feet, in strange alliance
With the keen wolf-hound sleeping undistraught;

Scales, hour-glass, bell, and magic-square above;
The grave and solid infant perched beside,
With open winglets that might bear a dove,
Intent upon its tablets, heavy-eyed;
Her folded wings as of a mighty-eagle,
But all too impotent to lift the regal
Robustness of her earth-born strength and pride;

And with those wings, and that light wreath which seems
To mock her grand head and the knotted frown
Of forehead charged with baleful thoughts and dreams,
The household bunch of keys, the housewife's gown
Voluminous, indented, and yet rigid
As if a shell of burnished metal frigid,
The feet thick shod to tread all weakness down;

The comet hanging o'er the waste dark seas,
The massy rainbow curved in front of it,
Beyond the village with the masts and trees;
The snaky-imp, dog-headed, from the Pit,
Bearing upon its batlike leathern pinions
Her name unfolded in the sun's dominions,
The "Melancholia" that transcends all wit.

Thus has the artist copied her, and thus
  Surrounded to expound her form sublime,
Her fate heroic and calamitous;
  Fronting the dreadful mysteries of Time,
Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
Undaunted in the hopeless conflagration
  Of the day setting on her baffled prime.

THE VINE

The wine of Love is music,
  And the feast of Love is song:
When Love sits down to banquet,
  Love sits long:

Sits long and rises drunken,
  But not with the feast and the wine;
He reeleth with his own heart,
  That great, rich Vine.

W. S. GILBERT

William Schwenk Gilbert was born in London, November 18, 1836. He was educated at Boulogne and at King's College, receiving his B.A. from the University of London in 1856. He entered the Civil Service in 1857, left it in 1861, was called to the bar in 1864, became a magistrate in 1891.

Thus his official career. But Gilbert's was too exuberant a nature to be satisfied with civic duties alone. His avocation, and later his profession, was art and letters, a penchant manifested early in youth when he illustrated his father's novels with that whimsical line which was to be his hallmark. In 1861 he began contributing verses to *Fun*, a short-lived rival of *Punch*, which had refused his contributions, returning the famous "Yarn of the Nancy Bell" on the ground that it was "too cannibalistic for its readers' tastes." These rhymes, ranging from the deftly ironic to the wildly absurd, were published under the title *The Bab Ballads* (1869) and were followed a few years later by *More Bab Ballads*, both volumes being characteristically illustrated by Gilbert himself.

Gilbert turned to the stage in 1866, writing burlesque, pantomimes, melodramas and sentimental pieces full of hearts and flowers for many years. It was not until *Trial by Jury* (1875) that

he found his collaborator and, at the same time, his métier. In Arthur Sullivan, Gilbert met the ideal partner. Sullivan's music combined the mock-gravity and the serious humor which we know as "Gilbertian," and which in turn and rhythm was characteristically English. The alliance was phenomenal, artistically and financially. Success followed success: *The Sorcerer* (1877), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880), *Patience or Bunthorne's Bride* (1881), *Iolanthe* (1882), *Princess Ida,* "a respectful perversion of Mr. Tennyson's exquisite poem" (1884), *The Mikado* (1885), *Ruddigore* (1887), *The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888), *The Gondoliers* (1889).

Most of these were brilliant extensions of various Bab Ballads, aimed at the outstanding foibles of his time. Masquerading as nonsense, his librettos were never without purpose; his pattering syllables, jingling to heel-and-toe measures, carried literary as well as social criticism. In the staid shadow of the Victorian court, Gilbert bore the office if not the habiliments of the Court Fool, satirizing the complacent insularity of that era. *Pinafore* is a lightly sardonic commentary on parochial office-holders and the British Navy; *Iolanthe* mocks the Peerage in general and the House of Lords in particular; *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Ruddigore* are even slyer in their ridicule of "blue blood." But none offers so much literary refreshment as *Patience,* founded on the Bab Ballad called "The Rival Curates." Here Gilbert, changing his clergymen to a couple of yearning esthetes, delightfully victimized a movement and an outstanding personality. Although Gilbert never specifically acknowledged it, there is little doubt that the figure of Bunthorne "uttering platitudes in stained-glass attitudes" was suggested by if not actually derived from Oscar Wilde. The "esthetic craze" died at the beginning of the century, but Gilbert's unvenomed irony is so universal that it persists beyond the movement that incited it, and applies to similar exaggerations in any time.

Most of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were produced at The Savoy, a theater especially built for them, and so, when Gilbert selected the best lyrics from his librettos, he published them under the title, *Songs of a Savoyard* (1890). In these, even more than in the Bab Ballads, he showed himself a master of not only wit and intricate rhyme, but of meter, fitting his sly parables to gay paradoxes in new and extraordinary supple rhythms. Scores of emulators have attempted his manner but none has captured his dexterity.

In 1908 Gilbert was knighted. He died at Harrow Weald, May, 1911.

GENTLE ALICE BROWN

It was a robber's daughter, and her name was Alice Brown,
Her father was the terror of a small Italian town;
Her mother was a foolish, weak, but amiable old thing;
But it isn't of her parents that I'm going for to sing.

As Alice was a-sitting at her window-sill one day,
A beautiful young gentleman he chanced to pass that way;
She cast her eyes upon him, and he looked so good and true,
That she thought, "I could be happy with a gentleman like you!"

And every morning passed her house that cream of gentlemen,
She knew she might expect him at a quarter unto ten;
A sorter in the Custom-house, it was his daily road
(The Custom-house was fifteen minutes' walk from her abode).

But Alice was a pious girl, who knew it wasn't wise
To look at strange young sorters with expressive purple eyes;
So she sought the village priest to whom her family confessed,
The priest by whom their little sins were carefully assessed.

"Oh, holy father," Alice said, "'twould grieve you, would it not,
To discover that I was a most disreputable lot?
Of all unhappy sinners, I'm the most unhappy one!"
The padre said, "Whatever have you been and gone and done?"

"I have helped mamma to steal a little kiddy from its dad,
I've assisted dear papa in cutting up a little lad,
I've planned a little burglary and forged a little check,
And slain a little baby for the coral on its neck!"

The worthy pastor heaved a sigh, and dropped a silent tear,
And said, "You mustn't judge yourself too heavily, my dear:
It's wrong to murder babies, little corals for to fleece;
But sins like these one expiates at half-a-crown apiece.

"Girls will be girls—you're very young, and flighty in your mind;
Old heads upon young shoulders we must not expect to find:
We mustn't be too hard upon these little girlish tricks.
Let's see—five crimes at half-a-crown—exactly twelve-and-six."

"Oh, father," little Alice cried, "your kindness makes me weep,
You do these little things for me so singularly cheap—
Your thoughtful liberality I never can forget;
But, oh! there is another crime I haven't mentioned yet!

"A pleasant-looking gentleman, with pretty purple eyes,
I've noticed at my window, as I've sat a-catching flies;
He passes by it every day as certain as can be—
I blush to say I've winked at him, and he has winked at me!"

"For shame!" said Father Paul, "my erring daughter! On my word
This is the most distressing news that I have ever heard.
Why, naughty girl, your excellent papa has pledged your hand
To a promising young robber, the lieutenant of his band!

"This dreadful piece of news will pain your worthy parents so!
They are the most remunerative customers I know;
For many many years they've kept starvation from my doors;
I never knew so criminal a family as yours!

"The common country folk in this insipid neighborhood
Have nothing to confess, they're so ridiculously good;
And if you marry any one respectable at all,
Why, you'll reform, and what then will become of Father Paul?"

The worthy priest, he up and drew his cowl upon his crown,
And started off in haste to tell the news to Robber Brown—
To tell him how his daughter, who was now for marriage fit,
Had winked upon a sorter, who reciprocated it.

Good Robber Brown he muffled up his anger pretty well:
He said, "I have a notion, and that notion I will tell;
I will nab this gay young sorter, terrify him into fits,
And get my gentle wife to chop him into little bits.

"I've studied human nature, and I know a thing or two;
Though a girl may fondly love a living gent, as many do,
A feeling of disgust upon her senses there will fall
When she looks upon his body chopped particularly small."

He traced that gallant sorter to a still suburban square;
He watched his opportunity, and seized him unaware;
He took a life-preserver and he hit him on the head,
And Mrs. Brown dissected him before she went to bed.

And pretty little Alice grew more settled in her mind,
She never more was guilty of a weakness of the kind,
Until at length good Robber Brown bestowed her pretty hand
On the promising young robber, the lieutenant of his band.

RECITATION AND SONG

(*From "Patience"*)

Bunthorne:

Am I alone,
And unobserved? I am!
Then let me own
I'm an esthetic sham!
This air severe
Is but a mere
Veneer!
This cynic smile
Is but a wile
Of guile!
This costume chaste
Is but good taste
Misplaced!
Let me confess
A languid love for lilies does *not* blight me!
Lank limbs and haggard cheeks do *not* delight me!
I do *not* care for dirty greens
By any means.
I do *not* long for all one sees
That's Japanese.
I am *not* fond of uttering platitudes
In stained-glass attitudes.
In short, my medievalism's affectation,
Born of a morbid love of admiration!

Song

If you're anxious for to shine in the high esthetic line as a man of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs of the transcendental terms, and plant them everywhere.
You must lie upon the daisies and discourse in novel phrases of your complicated state of mind,
The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a transcendental kind.
And every one will say
As you walk your mystic way,
"If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for *me*,
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep young man must be!"

Be eloquent in praise of the very dull old days which have long since passed away,
And convince 'em, if you can, that the reign of good Queen Anne was Culture's palmiest day.
Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh and new, and declare it's crude and mean;
For art stopped short in the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine.
And every one will say
As you walk your mystic way,
"If that's not good enough for him which is good enough for *me*,
Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this kind of youth must be!"

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen,
An attachment *à la* Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-French French bean!
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high esthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly, with a poppy or a lily in your medieval hand.
And every one will say,
As you walk your flowery way,

"If he's content with a vegetable love which would certainly
not suit *me*,
Why, what a particularly pure young man this pure young
man must be!"

TO THE TERRESTRIAL GLOBE

(*By a Miserable Wretch*)

Roll on, thou ball, roll on!
Through pathless realms of Space
Roll on!
What though I'm in a sorry case?
What though I cannot meet my bills?
What though I suffer toothache's ills?
What though I swallow countless pills?
Never *you* mind!
Roll on!

Roll on, thou ball, roll on!
Through seas of inky air
Roll on!
It's true I've got no shirts to wear;
It's true my butcher's bill is due;
It's true my prospects all look blue—
But don't let that unsettle you!
Never *you* mind!
Roll on!

(*It rolls on.*)

THE RIVAL CURATES

List while the poet trolls
Of Mr. Clayton Hooper,
Who had a cure of souls
At Spiffton-extra-Sooper.

He lived on curds and whey,
And daily sang their praises,
And then he'd go and play
With buttercups and daisies.

Wild croquet Hooper banned,
And all the sports of Mammon,
He warred with cribbage, and
He exorcised backgammon.

His helmet was a glance
That spoke of holy gladness;
A saintly smile his lance;
His shield a tear of sadness.

His Vicar smiled to see
This armor on him buckled:
With pardonable glee
He blessed himself and chuckled:

"In mildness to abound
My curate's sole design is;
In all the country round
There's none so mild as mine is!"

And Hooper, disinclined
His trumpet to be blowing,
Yet didn't think you'd find
A milder curate going.

A friend arrived one day
At Spiffton-extra-Sooper,
And in this shameful way
He spoke to Mr. Hooper.

"You think your famous name
For mildness can't be shaken,
That none can blot your fame—
But, Hooper, you're mistaken!

"Your mind is not as blank
As that of Hopley Porter,
Who holds a curate's rank
At Assesmilk-cum-Worter.

"*He* plays the airy flute,
And looks depressed and blighted,
Doves round about him 'toot,'
And lambkins dance delighted.

"He labors more than you
At worsted work, and frames it;
In old maids' albums too,
Sticks seaweed—yes, and names it!"

The tempter said his say,
Which pierced him like a needle—
He summoned straight away
His sexton and his beadle.

(These men were men who could
Hold liberal opinions:
On Sundays they were good—
On week-days they were minions.)

"To Hopley Porter go,
Your fare I will afford you—
Deal him a deadly blow,
And blessings shall reward you.

"But stay—I do not like
Undue assassination,
And so before you strike,
Make this communication:

"I'll give him this one chance—
If he'll more gayly bear him,
Play croquet, smoke and dance,
I willingly will spare him."

They went, those minions true,
To Assesmilk-cum-Worter,
And told their errand to
The Reverend Hopley Porter.

"What?" said that reverend gent,
"Dance through my hours of leisure?
Smoke?—bathe myself with scent?—
Play croquet? Oh, with pleasure!

"Wear all my hair in curl?
Stand at my door and wink—so—
At every passing girl?
My brothers, I should think so!

"For years I've longed for some
Excuse for this revulsion:
Now that excuse has come—
I do it on compulsion!"

He smoked and winked away—
This Reverend Hopley Porter—
The deuce there was to pay
At Assesmilk-cum-Worter.

And Hooper holds his ground,
In mildness daily growing—
They think him, all around,
The mildest curate going.

THE PERIWINKLE GIRL

I've often thought that headstrong youths
Of decent education,
Determine all-important truths
With strange precipitation.

The over-ready victims they
Of logical illusions,
And in a self-assertive way
They jump at strange conclusions.

Now take my case: Ere sorrow could
My ample forehead wrinkle,
I had determined that I would
Not like to be a winkle.

"A winkle," I would oft advance
With readiness provoking,
"Can seldom flirt, and never dance,
Or soothe his mind by smoking."

In short, I spurned the shelly joy,
And spoke with strange decision:
Men pointed to me as a boy
Who held them in derision.

But I was young—too young by far—
Or I had been more wary:
I knew not then that winkles are
The stock-in-trade of Mary.

I had not seen her sunlight blithe
As o'er their shells it dances;
I've seen those winkles almost writhe
Beneath her beaming glances.

Both high and low and great and small
Fell prostrate at her tootsies;
They all were noblemen, and all
Had balances at Coutts's.

Dukes with the lovely maiden dealt,
Duke Bailey and Duke Humphy,
Who ate her winkles till they felt
Exceedingly uncomfy.

Duke Bailey greatest wealth computes,
And sticks, they say, at no-thing;
He wears a pair of golden boots,
And silver underclothing.

Duke Humphy, as I understand,
Though mentally acuter,
His boots are only silver, and
His underclothing pewter.

A third adorer had the girl,
A man of lowly station—
A miserable grov'ling Earl
Besought her approbation.

This humble cad she did refuse
With much contempt and loathing:
He wore a pair of leather shoes,
And cambric underclothing!

"Ha! ha!" she cried. "Upon my word!
Well, really—come, I never!
Oh, go along, it's too absurd!
My goodness! Did you ever?

"Two Dukes would make their Bowles a bride,
And from her foes defend her."
"Well, not exactly that," they cried,
"We offer guilty splendor.

"We do not offer marriage rite,
So please dismiss the notion!"
"Oh, dear!" said she: "that alters quite
The state of my emotion."

The Earl he up, and says, says he,
"Dismiss them to their orgies,
For I am game to marry thee
Quite reg'lar at St. George's."

He'd had, it happily befell,
A decent education,
His views would have befitted well
A far superior station.

His sterling worth had worked a cure,
She never heard him grumble;
She saw his soul was good and pure,
Although his rank was humble.

Her views of earldoms and their lot
All underwent expansion:
Come, Virtue in an earldom's cot!
Go, Vice in ducal mansion!

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Algernon Charles Swinburne was born in London, April 5, 1837. His father was Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne, descendant of an old Northumbrian family, and though the son was born in the capital, his boyhood was spent in the country, half the year at his grandfather's estate in Northumberland, the other half at his father's home on the Isle of Wight. Thus he was exposed to two contrary influences, although his poetry, full of southern luxuriance, reflects little of the rigorous north. After some private tuition, young Swinburne attended Eton for five years, Balliol College (Oxford) for three, and though he won a prize in Italian and French, left the University without taking a degree.

Immediately upon leaving Oxford, Swinburne published his first work, *The Queen Mother* and *Rosamund* (1860), two poetic dramas, eloquent enough in their own right and remarkable for a youth of twenty-three. Although the volume has an energetic sweep and freshness lacking in the later plays—being to his Mary Stuart trilogy what Wagner's "Tannhäuser" is to the "Ring"—the work passed unnoticed and Swinburne departed for Italy. His sojourn there, during which he became acquainted with Walter Savage Landor, was of short duration, but the richness of color and climate must have acted like a forcing-ground and quickened a seed ready for ripening. A few years later, *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) attracted the attention of the *literati*. *Chastelard* (the first of the three tragedies dealing with Mary, Queen of Scots) followed and was respectfully considered. But Swinburne was not a name which held glamour until the publication of *Poems and Ballads* in 1866. Critics and the lay public were taken by storm. "There had been," says William Morton Payne in his introduction to Swinburne's *Selected Poems*, "no such sensation in English poetry since the appearance of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*." But whereas Byron's work was followed equally by the literary and unliterary, Swinburne's appealed—and still appeals—only to the poetic. By the end of his thirtieth year, his reputation was second to none in his time and country and Swinburne became a name for conjuration and controversy.

Influences were already noticeable, influences that, at first dis-

guised by the rush and roar of Swinburne's syllables, have become increasingly more apparent. *Atalanta in Calydon,* in spite of its attempt to mingle lyric abandon and tragic portentousness, is an exotic which, with its Greek mode and Attic idioms, has the taint of translation. Its ringing choruses are all that have survived, enlarging English poetry with new figures and rhythms. *Song of Italy* (1867) and *Songs Before Sunrise* (1871) reveal another side of the poet, the political insurgent—and another derivation. "His first book," Edmund Gosse admits in his comprehensive article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* "is deliberately Shakespearian in design and expression; the *Atalanta,* of course, is equally deliberate in its pursuit of the Hellenic spirit." *Poems and Ballads* is a hybrid in which the lank lilies of Pre-Raphaelitism are grafted on the evil flowers of Baudelaire—a lesser and lighter Baudelaire for, as Edward Thomas pointed out, his hymn to the roses and raptures of vice is "from the lips outward. In a spirit of gay and amateur perversity he flatters sin with appellations of virtue, as George Herbert gave his religious poetry the unction of love."

Song of Italy and *Songs Before Sunrise* present if not a *volte face* a new turn. Here Swinburne revolts against political and churchly conventions rather than against moral restraint. In *Poems and Ballads—Second Series* (1878) the forty-year-old Swinburne, discarding Baudelaire and Mazzini, devoted himself to Victor Hugo. He was now at the very peak of his creative—and adaptive—powers; volume after volume flew from under his facile hand. His *Study of Shakespeare* (1879) is a mixture of eloquence and exaggeration, a hearty instance of "the noble pleasure of praising" as opposed to pedantic dusting of dry bones. In 1880 he published three wholly different kinds of books: *Songs of the Springtides, Studies in Song* and *The Modern Heptalogia* (published anonymously), a set of devastating parodies subtitled "The Seven Against Sense" and containing mocking burlesques of Tennyson's pantheism, Browning's cacophony, Mrs. Browning's lax sentimentality, and Swinburne's own alliterative wordiness. The flow of verse grew still more voluminous after Swinburne met Theodore Watts-Dunton, poet and essayist, who guarded the erratic poet with the love of a brother and the scrutiny of a father and with whom he lived until his death. *Mary Stuart,* concluding the trilogy, appeared in 1881. Less than a year later, he had completed *Tristram of Lyonesse,* a shower of wild rockets compared to the domestic oil-lamps of *Idylls of the King,* restoring to Malory some of the grossness and strength which Tennyson had emasculated. Swinburne's versatility was emphasized by *A Century of Roundels* (1883) which, as the title suggests, contains a hundred variations of the French rondeau in a form which he himself devised, by

A Midsummer Holiday (1884), which extended his mannerisms, by *Marino Faliero* (1885), a far richer narrative than Byron's story on the same theme, by *Miscellanies* (1886), by the adroit *Astrophel* (1894), and by *The Tale of Balen* (1896), a faithfully versified section of the *Morte d'Arthur* in more than two thousand lines. And so on, without stock- or breath-taking, until *A Channel Passage and Other Poems* in 1904, in which year the eleven volume edition of his *Poems and Dramas* was begun. A short pause followed. Then a novel (*Love's Cross Currents*) rescued and revised from an old periodical, then the *Duke of Gardia* (1908). Then the richly accoutered *Age of Shakespeare*. Then death, after a sudden attack of pneumonia, at the home of Watts-Dunton (to whom he had dedicated his *Collected Edition*), April 10, 1909.

What remains of the huge mass of epics, Latin imitations, experiments, sestinas, ballades and double-ballades, excoriations, enthusiasms, *tours de force* in every conceivable meter? There remain, chiefly, the meters themselves and their resonance. Swinburne's phrasing and philosophy seem to matter little; we are no longer exercised by their morality or immorality. The fury is gone, only the sound is left. And even this, to be relished, has to be sampled sparingly. As Edmund Gosse was forced to concede, "The young lover of poetry, when first he encounters Swinburne's influence, is almost bound to be swept away by it; the wild, extravagant license, the apparent sincerity, the vigor and the verve, cry directly to the aspirations of youth like a clarion in the wilderness. But while this is inevitable, it is also true that the critical lover of poetry outgrows an unquestioning allegiance to the Swinburnian mood more quickly than any other of the diverse emotions aroused by the study of the great poets." Edward Thomas, whose *Algernon Charles Swinburne: A Critical Study* (1912) is a most penetrating synthesis, summarizes the lack of finality in Swinburne's smooth flowing phrases: "He can astonish and melt, but seldom thrill; and when he does it is not by any felicity of, as it were, God-given inevitable words. He has to depend on sound and an atmosphere of words which is now and then concentrated and crystallized into an intensity of effect which is almost magical, perhaps never quite magical. This atmosphere comes from a vocabulary very rich in words connected with objects, sensations, emotions of pleasure and beauty, but used somewhat lightly and even in appearance indiscriminately."

His philosophical verses, praised as much as the early "libidinous" lyrics were condemned, have suffered by reappraisal. To his generation Swinburne seemed both a dark, lawless satyr and a bright herald of new laws. He was, we see, neither. He was a rhyme-intoxicated genius whose vision of another heaven was

violent but vague, whose loose ideas were held in a set of fixed symbols, whose concept of liberty was little more than a large summoning of winds, seas and lightnings.

Swinburne's reliance on alliteration—the hall-mark of familiar parodies—degenerated into a trick that is first titillating, then amusing and finally wearisome. Nevertheless the weakness of his verse is not that it is too alliterative but too literary. His preoccupation is with life at second-hand, with its recording or rebellious spirits, rather than with life itself. Thus his volumes are crammed with tributes to poets, to Shelley, Sappho, Chaucer, Catullus, Sidney, Browning, Baudelaire, Gautier, Landor, with apostrophes to Carlyle, Hugo, Mazzini, Wagner, with sonnets to Massinger, Jonson, Webster and seventeen other Elizabethan dramatists. Here, as elsewhere, his rhythms so easily liberated dictate the course of his thought. The *élan* of the early "sulphurous" love poems also prompts the peans in praise of the creation of a United Italy and a restored French Republic. His sympathies, quickly aroused, were quickly sublimated; he had emotional rather than intellectual comprehension.

But if much of this poetry is a sea of syllables which first entice then engulf the reader; if, as Saintsbury says in what is meant to be a paragraph of praise, Swinburne planned "sea serpents in verse in order to show how easily and gracefully he can make them coil and uncoil," the metaphors remind us that no English poet has written more rapturously about the sea or with more passion for the renewal of spirit which that element symbolizes. Where Keats identifies himself with the nightingale, Shelley with the skylark, Poe with the raven, Swinburne's bird is, appropriately, the seamew. Yet after prolixity is forgotten, there persists the pantheistic pean of "Hertha," the Pre-Raphaelite picture of "Madonna Mia," the giddy music of "Itylus," "When the Hounds of Spring," "Hymn to Proserpine," "The Triumph of Time," "A Forsaken Garden" and a dozen others. The worst of Swinburne has been caricatured by himself in "Nephelidia" which begins:

From the depths of the dreamy decline of the dawn through a notable
nimbus of nebulous noonshine,
Pallid and pink as the palm of the flag-flower that flickers with fear of
the flies as they float
Are the looks of our lovers that lustrously lean from a marvel of mystic
miraculous moonshine,
These that we feel in the blood of our blushes that thicken and threaten
with throbs through the throat?

What is best lives in his lyrics, in the generous spirit and the impetuous movement of his syllables. Here is richness of sound

and spirit, a zest which, even in the later work, never outgrew headlong, eloquent, and often grandiloquent youth.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

Here, where the world is quiet,
  Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
  In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest time and mowing,
  A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
  And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
  For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
  And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
  And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
  Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
  And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
  No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
  Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes,
Save this whereout she crushes
  For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;

Dead dreams of days forsaken
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
Today will die tomorrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

SONG

Love laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rosy bed;
And his eyes with tears were red,
And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn
Kept watch by his head forlorn.
Till the night was overworn
And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day
And kissed Love's lips as he lay,
And the watchers ghostly and gray
Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew bright,
And his lips waxed ruddy as light:
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day shall bring back delight.

ITYLUS

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad there of yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow.
The voice of the child's blood crying yet
Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

A LEAVE-TAKING

Let us go hence, my songs; she will not hear.
Let us go hence together without fear;
Keep silence now, for singing-time is over
And over all old things and all things dear.
She loves not you nor me as all we love her.
Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part; she will not know.
Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
Full of blown sand and foam; what help is there?
There is no help, for all these things are so,
And all the world is bitter as a tear.
And how these things are, though ye strove to show,
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence; she will not weep,
We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle and reap."
All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow;
And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest; she will not love.
She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,
Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.
Come hence, let be, lie still; it is enough.
Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep;
And though she saw all heaven in flower above,
She would not love.

Let us give up, go down; she will not care.
Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
And the sea moving saw before it move
One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair;
Though all those waves went over us, and drove
Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair
She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence; she will not see.
Sing all once more together: surely she,
She too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see.

FROM "THE TRIUMPH OF TIME"

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast;
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;

Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,
A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say
Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;
Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.
But death is the worst that comes of thee;
Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,
But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when,
Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.
The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,
Shall they not vanish away and apart?
But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

FROM "HYMN TO PROSERPINE"

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN ROME OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH)

Vicisti, Galilæe

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown gray from thy breath;
We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fullness of death.
Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;
But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives not May.
Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the world is not sweet in the end;
For the old faiths loosen and fall, the new years ruin and rend.

Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock that abides;
But her ears are vexed with the roar and her face with the foam of the tides.
O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks and rods!
O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted Gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all knees bend,
I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look to the end.
All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits and sorrows are cast
Far out with the foam of the present that sweeps to the surf of the past;
Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and between the remote sea-gates,
Waste water washes, and tall ships founder, and deep death waits:
Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad about with the seas as with wings,
And impelled of invisible tides, and fulfilled of unspeakable things,
White-eyed and poisonous finned, shark-toothed and serpentine-curled,
Rolls, under the whitening wind of the future, the wave of the world.
The depths stand naked in sunder behind it, the storms flee away;
In the hollow before it the thunder is taken and snared as a prey;
In its sides is the north-wind bound; and its salt is of all men's tears;
With light of ruin, and sound of changes, and pulse of years:
With travail of day after day, and with trouble of hour upon hour;
And bitter as blood is the spray; and the crests are as fangs that devour:
And its vapor and storm of its steam as the sighing of spirits to be;
And its noise as the noise in a dream; and its depth as the roots of the sea:

And the height of its heads as the height of the utmost stars of the air:
And the ends of the earth at the might thereof tremble, and time is made bare.
Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will ye chasten the high sea with rods?
Will ye take her to chain her with chains, who is older than all ye Gods?
All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass and be past;
Ye are Gods, and behold ye shall die, and the waves be upon you at last.
In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the years, in the changes of things,
Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the world shall forget you for kings.
Though the feet of thine high priests tread where thy lords and our forefathers trod,
Though these that were God's are dead and thou being dead art a God.
Though before thee the throned Cytherian be fallen, and hidden her head,
Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy dead shall go down to thee dead.
Of the maiden thy mother, men sing as a goddess with grace clad around;
Thou art throned where another was king; where another was queen she is crowned.
Yea, once we had sight of another: but now she is queen, say these.
Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom of flowering seas,
Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment, and fair as the foam,
And fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess, and mother of Rome.
For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sorrow; but ours,
Her deep hair heavily laden with odor and color of flowers,
White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendor, a flame,
Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth grew sweet with her name.

For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, and rejected; but she
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial, her foot on the sea,
And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and the viewless ways,
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue stream of the bays.
Ye are fallen, our lords by what token? we wist that ye should not fall.
Ye were all so fair that are broken; and one more fair than ye all.
But I turn to her still, having seen she shall surely abide in the end;
Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and befriend.
O daughter of earth, of my mother, her crown and blossom of birth,
I am also, I also, thy brother; I go as I came unto earth.
In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in heaven, the night where thou art,
Where the silence is more than all tunes, where sleep overflows from the heart,
Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in our world, and the red rose is white,
And the wind falls faint as it blows with the fume of the flowers of the night.
And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the shadow of Gods from afar
Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the deep dim soul of a star,
In the sweet low light of thy face, under heavens untrod by the sun,
Let my soul with their souls find place, and forget what is done and undone.
Thou art more than the Gods who number the days of our temporal breath;
For these give labor and slumber; but thou, Proserpina, death.
Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a season in silence. I know
I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep; even so.

For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span;
A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.
So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep.
For there is no God found stronger than death; and death is a sleep.

A BALLADE OF DREAMLAND

I hid my heart in a nest of roses,
Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;
In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is,
Under the roses I hid my heart.
Why would it sleep not? why should it start,
When never a leaf of the rose-trees stirred?
What made sleep flutter his wings and part?
Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes,
And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart;
Lie still, for the wind on the warm sea dozes,
And the wind is unquieter yet than thou art.
Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound smart?
Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred?
What bids the lids of thy sleep dispart?
Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm encloses,
It never was writ in the traveler's chart,
And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is,
It never was sold in the merchant's mart.
The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart,
And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops heard;
No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart,
Only the song of a secret bird.

Envoi

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part.
To sleep for a season and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
Only the song of a secret bird.

TO A SEAMEW

When I had wings, my brother,
  Such wings were mine as thine:
Such life my heart remembers
In all as wild Septembers
As this when life seems other,
  Though sweet, than once was mine;
When I had wings, my brother,
  Such wings were mine as thine.

Such life as thrills and quickens
  The silence of thy flight,
Or fills thy note's elation
With lordlier exultation
Than man's whose faint heart sickens
  With hopes and fears that blight
Such life as thrills and quickens
  The silence of thy flight.

Thy cry from windward clanging
  Makes all the cliffs rejoice;
Though storm clothe seas with sorrow,
Thy call salutes the morrow;
While shades of pain seem hanging
  Round earth's most rapturous voice,
Thy cry from windward clanging
  Makes all the cliffs rejoice.

We, sons and sires of seamen,
  Whose home is all the sea,
What place man may, we claim it;
But thine—whose thought may name it?
Free birds live higher than freemen,
  And gladlier ye than we—
We, sons and sires of seamen,
  Whose home is all the sea.

For you the storm sounds only
  More notes of more delight
Than earth's in sunniest weather:
When heaven and sea together

Join strengths against the lonely
  Lost bark borne down by night,
For you the storm sounds only
  More notes of more delight.

With wider wing, and louder
  Long clarion-call of joy,
Thy tribe salutes the terror
Of darkness, wild as error,
But sure as truth, and prouder
  Than waves with man for toy;
With wider wing, and louder
  Long clarion-call of joy.

The wave's wing spreads and flutters,
  The wave's heart swells and breaks;
One moment's passion thrills it,
One pulse of power fulfills it,
And ends the pride it utters
  When, loud with life that quakes,
The wave's wing spreads and flutters,
  The wave's heart swells and breaks.

But thine and thou, my brother,
  Keep heart and wing more high
Than aught may scarce or sunder;
The waves whose throats are thunder
Fall hurtling each on other,
  And triumph as they die;
But thine and thou, my brother,
  Keep heart and wing more high.

More high than wrath or anguish,
  More strong than pride or fear.
The sense or soul half hidden
In thee, for us forbidden,
Bids thee nor change nor languish,
  But live thy life as here,
More high than wrath or anguish,
  More strong than pride or fear.

We are fallen, even we, whose passion
  On earth is nearest thine;
Who sing, and cease from flying;
Who live, and dream of dying:
Gray time, in time's gray fashion,
  Bids wingless creatures pine:
We are fallen, even we, whose passion
  On earth is nearest thine.

The lark knows no such rapture,
  Such joy no nightingale,
As sways the songless measure
Wherein thy wings take pleasure:
Thy love may no man capture,
  Thy pride may no man quail;
The lark knows no such rapture,
  Such joy no nightingale.

And we, whom dreams embolden,
  We can but creep and sing
And watch through heaven's waste hollow
The flight no sight may follow
To the utter bourne beholden
  Of none that lack thy wing:
And we, whom dreams embolden,
  We can but creep and sing.

Our dreams have wings that falter,
  Our hearts bear hopes that die:
For thee no dream could better
A life no fears may fetter,
A pride no care can alter,
  That wots not whence or why
Our dreams have wings that falter,
  Our hearts bear hopes that die.

With joy more fierce and sweeter
  Than joys we deem divine
Their lives by time untarnished,
Are girt about and garnished,

Who match the wave's full meter
And drink the wind's wild wine
With joy more fierce and sweeter
Than joys we deem divine.

Ah, well were I for ever,
Wouldst thou change lives with me,
And take my song's wild honey,
And give me back thy sunny
Wide eyes that weary never,
And wings that search the sea;
Ah, well were I for ever,
Wouldst thou change lives with me.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briars if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither
And men that love lightly may die—but we?"
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.

Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

JOYEUSE GARDE[1]

The sun was heavy; no more shade at all
Than you might cover with a hollow cup
There was in the south chamber; wall by wall,
Slowly the hot noon filled the castle up,
One hand among the rushes, one let play
Where the loose gold began to swerve and droop
From his fair mantle to the floor, she lay;
Her face held up a little, for delight
To feel his eyes upon it, one would say;
Her grave shut lips were glad to be in sight

[1] Edmund Gosse says that it was Swinburne's custom to allow miscellaneous matter to collect on his table—proofs, bills, letters, prospectuses, manuscripts—until the litter reached formidable proportions. The poet would then pounce upon the pile, gather it up in the day's newspaper, and place it carefully upon a shelf, never to be touched again, unless by another parcel of the same sort laid beside it. This is one of the fourteen posthumous poems salvaged from this heterogeneous mass and printed in *The New York Evening Post* in 1919.

Of Tristram's kisses; she had often turned
Against her shifted pillows in the night
To lessen the sore pain wherein they burned
For want of Tristram; her great eyes had grown
Less keen and sudden, and a hunger yearned
Her sick face through, these wretched years agone.
Her eyes said "Tristram" now, but her lips held
The joy too close for any smile or moan
To move them; she was patiently fulfilled
With a slow pleasure that slid everwise
Even into hands and feet, but could not build
The house of its abiding in her eyes
Nor measure any music by her speech.
Between the sunlight came a noise of flies
To pain sleep from her, thick from peach to peach
Upon the bare wall's hot red level, close
Among the leaves too high for her to reach;
So she drew in and set her feet and rose
Saying, "Too late to sleep; I pray you speak
To save me from the noises. Lest I lose
Some minute of this season; I am weak
And cannot answer if you help me not,
When the shame catches on my brow and cheek."
For in the speaking all her face grew hot
And her mouth altered with some pain, I deem
Because her word had stung like a bad thought
That makes us recollect some bitter dream.
She bowed to let him kiss her and went on;
"All things are changed so, will this day not seem
Most sad and evil when I sit alone
Outside your eyes? Will it not vex my prayers
To think of laughter that is twin to moan
And happy words that make not holier?
Nathless I had good will to say one thing;
Though it seems pleasant in the late warm air
To ride alone and see the last of spring,
I cannot lose you, Tristram (a weak smile
Moved her lips and went out); men say the king
Hath set keen spies about for many a mile,
Quick hands to get them gold, sharp eyes to see
Where your way swerves across them; this long while
Hath Mark grown older with his hate of me,

And now his hand for lust to smite at us
Plucks the white hairs inside his beard that he
This year made thicker, seeing this he does
I pray you note that we may meet with him
At riding through the branchèd growth, and then
Our wine grow bitter at the golden rim
And taste of blood and tears, not meat to drink
As the new honey wherein juices swim
Of fair red vintage." Her voice done, I think
He had no heart to answer; yet some time
The noon outside them seemed to throb and sink
Wrought in the quiet to a rounded rhyme.
Then "certes" said he "this were harm to both
If spears grew thick between the beech and lime
Or amid reeds that let the river south;
Yet so I think you might get help of me;
Had I not heart to smile, when Iseult's mouth
Kissed Palomydes under a thick tree?
For I remember as the wind sets low
How all that peril ended quietly
In a green place where heavy sunflowers blow."

MADONNA MIA

Under green apple boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
  Between two bowers;
In either of the twain
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
  All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
  Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand;
In all the great green land
  None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
  Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
  Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,
Love, swift to wake, to weep,
  To laugh to gaze;
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
  In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
  Her joys from these;
In the deep-feather firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
  Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
  And is not sad;
The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes;
None knows her, weak or wise,
  Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
  Wherein time grows,

What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,
  Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said;
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
  And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
  And various wine.

This is my lady's praise:
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
  In sunset lands;
This was my lady's birth;
God gave her might and mirth
And laid his whole sweet earth
  Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house;
She wears upon her brows
  The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
  Being strong as love.

CHORUS

(*From "Atalanta in Calydon"*)

Before the beginning of years,
  There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
  Grief, with a glass that ran;

Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
  Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
  And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
  Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
  And life, the shadow of death.
And the high gods took in hand
  Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
  From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
  And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
  In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
  And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
  And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
  That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
  The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
  They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
  They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
  For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought,
  A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
  And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
  And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
  With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
  In his eyes foreknowledge of death;

He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

"WHEN THE HOUNDS OF SPRING"

(*From "Atalanta in Calydon"*)

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;

And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Maenad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

HERTHA

I am that which began;
Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
I am equal and Whole;
God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily; I am the soul.

Before ever land was,
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree,
Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches, I was, and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
First drifted and swam;
Out of me are the forces
That save it or damn;
Out of me man and woman, and wild-beast and bird; before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
Nought is there to go;
Love or unlove me,
Unknow me or know,
I am that which unloves me and loves; I am stricken, and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss,
The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul and the body that is.

I am the thing which blesses
My spirit elate;
That which caresses
With hands uncreate
My limbs unbegotten that measure the length of the measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
Looking Godward, to cry
"I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high?"
I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou but myself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,
The plow-cloven clod
And the plowshare drawn thorough,
The germ and the sod,
The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower, the dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,
Child, underground?
Fire that impassioned thee,
Iron that bound,
Dim changes of water, what thing of all these hast thou known of or found?

Canst thou say in thine heart
Thou hast seen with thine eyes
With what cunning of art
Thou wast wrought in what wise,
By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen, and shown on my breast to the skies?

. . . . . .

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
As my soul in thee saith,
Give thou as I gave thee,
Thy life-blood and breath,
Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers of thy thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving
As mine were to thee;
The free life of thy living,
Be the gift of it free;
Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt thou give thee to me.

. . . . . .

Where dead ages hide under
The live roots of the tree,
In my darkness the thunder
Make utterance of me;
In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
As his feathers are spread
And his feet set to climb
Through the boughs overhead,
And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
Blow through me and cease,
The war-wind that rages,
The spring-wind of peace,
Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language of storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places
Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins, drop through me as sands.

. . . . . .

I bid you but be;
I have need not of prayer;
I have need of you free
As your mouths of mine air;
That my heart may be greater within me, beholding the fruits of me fair.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown gray from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
Truth slays and forgives;
But to you, as time takes him,
This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
Man's polestar and pole;
Man, pulse of my center, and fruit of my body, and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom;
One beam of mine eye:
One topmost blossom
That scales the sky;
Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.

JOHN TODHUNTER

John Todhunter was born December 30, 1839, in Dublin, received his education at York School and Trinity College, Dublin, and took his degrees of M.D. and M.Ch. there. He won the Vice Chancellors' Prize for verse in 1864, pursued his medical studies

in Vienna and Paris, and returned to practice in Ireland. After a few years he turned from medicine to letters, becoming professor of English Literature at Alexandria College, Dublin (1870-1874), traveled again, and finally settled in London, where he died in 1916.

Todhunter's first volume, *Laurella and Other Poems* (1876), scarcely distinguished itself, differing little from most initial ventures of the period. His next publication was more ambitious: *Alcestis, A Dramatic Poem* (1879) which was followed by *Forest Songs* (1881). Todhunter then occupied himself with Irish lore and his next book, *The Banshee and Other Poems* (1888), was composed of several longish poems founded on certain Bardic tales of Ireland. *Sounds and Sweet Airs* (1905) attempted, not too successfully, to evoke the musical atmosphere of Chopin, Schumann, and other romantic composers. Todhunter's *Essays* were posthumously published in 1920 and his *Collected Poems* were assembled in 1930.

Todhunter's verse is accomplished rather than acute. Its author was most at home in the ballads, particularly those of German persuasion. "The Grey Man"—one of his best—begins:

> A wild wind shakes the sashes,
> The Forester sits alone

which recalls its models more vividly than the scene. The influence is not unnatural since Todhunter spent much time in translations, having published his versions of Heine in *The Book of Songs* (1907).

His sonnets are reminiscent of Blunt's without having Blunt's intensity, although a few of them deserve better than the neglect which has fallen on almost all of Todhunter's work.

LOVE AND LIFE

I met Love wandering in the fields of Life,
Whose arrows, winged with joy and barbed with pain,
Had marred his fair Olympian limbs in vain,
For with his dreaming eyes, blind to all strife,
He held his way, and, often left for slain,
Still rose, to spend his shafts on things despised,
Weak, sad, uncomely things. And I, surprised,
To see him idiot-like such mien maintain,
Questioned him as he passed why this was so.
Then, for all answer, with a martyr's smile,

He bent his golden bow, and all my heart
In sudden flame I found, and grew to know
Strange secrets of the melancholy Isle
Where Life and Love, the twins, were torn apart.

GOLGOTHA

On his cross still hangs the Saviour,
Bears our sins in dreadful sum;
Eighteen centuries and three quarters,
Yet his kingdom is not come.

"It is finished!" Was it finished
When thy path of pain was trod?
Thou didst bear the sins of mortals.
Who shall bear the sins of God?

THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy was born at Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester, June 2, 1840, of parents in humble circumstances, his father being a stone-mason. His schooling was fitful. When sixteen, he was apprenticed to an ecclesiastical architect. Later, he left his native village and worked in London, where he won the prize offered by the Royal Institute of British Architects. This was in 1863. A few years after, he abandoned architecture and, in 1871, his first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, was published anonymously. It was a failure, little attention being paid to the author until the publication of *Under the Greenwood Tree*. From that time on his success as a writer was assured; *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) and *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) securing his position at the outset.

It was not until he was almost sixty—in 1898, to be precise—that Hardy abandoned prose and challenged attention as a poet, verse having been the form of expression with which he began and, as many (including the editor and Hardy himself) believe, the form by which he will be remembered longest. Technically considered, the rhythms of his verse are, at first reading, irritatingly rude; his syntax is often clumsy; his language involved. But, beneath the surface crudities—and many of them are efforts to achieve particular effects—Hardy's poetry is as disciplined as it is original. If its idiom is sometimes overweighted, it corresponds to the large design and complexities of his thought. "It has," says

Dorothy Martin, in an essay on Hardy's lyrics, "an elemental power which, in its wide range of emotion, its sense of inner conflict between mind and heart, affords something like a counterpart in poetry to the art of Rodin in sculpture. To the horror of the orthodox, it has outwardly the same challenging roughnesses and acerbities; it has also the same profundity and stimulating power for those who, refusing to be put off by a difficult exterior, push on to the inner spirit of which this exterior is the vigorous, provocative but fitting expression."

As has been said, by Hardy himself, he "was *compelled* to give up verse for prose," but at no time did he prefer the many fictions which won him an international reputation. On the contrary, he was bitter that necessity had forced him to discontinue the creation of poetry for the writing of novels, and in private life would refer to the latter as "pot-boilers" and "wretched stuff." Nevertheless, between the ages of thirty-four and fifty-seven, Hardy published eleven novels and three collections of stories, of which *The Return of the Native* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* are the sharpest in characterization although *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1896) caused more comment. The former started a controversy which grew into an attack, chiefly because of the social criticism which had been implicit in his previous work but which was now openly expressed. With greater violence, almost with vituperation, Hardy was called to account for *Jude the Obscure*. This further example of critical stupidity hurt Hardy so deeply that he said it "cured him of all interest in novel-writing."

Two years later he turned definitely and exclusively to poetry, publishing *Wessex Poems* (1898) with his own drawings, and *Poems of the Past and Present* (1902). Both volumes were respectfully but unenthusiastically received. Then, when Hardy was sixty-four years old and critics had casually decided that his power had waned, he published the first part of *The Dynasts* (1904), that epic which was to spread itself on the largest canvas of his time. By 1908 the work was complete, a huge drama of the Napoleonic Wars in three books, nineteen acts and one hundred and thirty scenes. This triumph is the apotheosis of the poet. Of it, the *London Times* wrote: "A work which combines as only a work of genius could combine, a poetic philosophy with minute historical knowledge and a shrewd eye for the tragical and comical ways of men and women." Lascelles Abercrombie, a most conservative appraiser, unhesitatingly called it "the biggest and most consistent exhibition of fatalism in literature."

As Hardy grew older, his poems increased, and his powers with them. Explaining the large number of verses written after his sixtieth year, he said that he would merely "go to a drawer and

take something out." But, although it is true that he resuscitated and refurbished many lyrics of an earlier period, Hardy continued to create new ones no less knotted, no less characteristically acrid, delicately nostalgic, pungently bitter-sweet, until he was almost ninety. When he was seventy-nine his *Collected Poems* (1919) displayed the range and fecundity but not the end of his gifts. As an octogenarian, he published *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922), *Human Shows: Far Phantasies, Songs and Trifles* (1925) and *Winter Words in Various Moods and Metres*, which, though appearing posthumously, had been arranged and selected by Hardy before his death.

Hardy died in his eighty-eighth year on January 11, 1928, depriving contemporary England of its most honored author. Although his ashes were placed in Westminster Abbey, his heart (as requested in his Will) was buried in the churchyard of his own village, in the soil he loved so faithfully.

His work resists a pat synthesis. Hardy wrote in almost every manner, good and bad, in every meter, old and new, mixing novelty and banality, dropping heavy cacophonies into the lightest melodies, balancing the profound with the trivial, the cosmic with the comic. Most readers prefer him in that curiously lyric-narrative style which he perfected, but his intensities escape category. Each of his collections runs the gamut of life and its reflection in literature, and his style follows the scale. Modern and ancient, his technique is as advanced as the youngest contemporary's, as formal as a poetic ballet-master's. "In the Servants' Quarters" is a splendid instance of Hardy's talk-flavored verse, which ascends from casual speech on a *crescendo* of dramatic effect, to a half-expected yet startling climax. In quite another manner, his *Satires of Circumstance* (reminding an American reader of Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, which it anticipated) are epigrammatic vignettes in which he condensed whole domestic dramas. "The Dark-Eyed Gentlemen," on the other hand, is as simple-spontaneous as a folk-tune and quite unlike Hardy's other verse.

Hardy's resources are seemingly endless. At one moment he plays the pathetic fanciful as in "The Tree and the Lady," the next moment he strikes the ironically bizarre in "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?" "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'" packs an epic into twelve quiet-colored lines; "In the Suburbs" is a purely objective delineation in black and white; "The Oxen" turns a superstition to tender humor. And though each of these is a lyric and all are straightforward in rhythm, each has its own dexterous difference in meter. It has passed unnoted, but Hardy even ventured into the French Forms for occasional effects; "The Roman Road" is as neat a rondeau as Austin Dobson ever fash-

ioned; "Winter in Durnover Field" is thoroughly Hardyesque and yet it is a precise if unusual triolet.

Hardy's questioning the beneficence of Nature led to accusations of pessimism, a charge that he continually but ineffectually denied. Actually the poet was an unorthodox moralist whose heart went out to the things, people and elements he loved. These elements—as he says ironically in "New Year's Eve," affirmatively in "The Subalterns"—are not actuated either by blind hate or blinder chance, but are subject to laws beyond the rules of logic. Hardy denied no God, but sensed design in chaos. Even when he could not rationalize a universe struggling to establish order in imperfection, he praised it, "hoping it might be so."

As a believer he accepts all experience, every "crass casualty," and though his philosophy contains little personal exultation, it voices the cry for unity. Even his ungainly poems have an apprehension and substance that reduce the dexterities of many of his contemporaries to airy ephemerae. Though the surface of his verse is often roughened by verbal excrescences, the essential content is pure, because Hardy's responses, unaffected by current theorizing, were strangely single and pure.

In the brief note preceding Hardy's contribution in *Great Names* (1926) Siegfried Sassoon wrote, "Without laboring the analogy between poetry and religion, it may be said that sham poetry is as pernicious as sham religion; and that for poets a merely poetical state of mind is as dangerous as a religious belief based on superficial religious emotion. That is why Hardy's poetry of experience is so significant. He records with microscopic exactitude, preserving a flawless artistic integrity. . . . In his short poems he fuses all that he has learned from the past and endured in the present, in a supreme imaginative vision with masterly and original craft in words and subtle ironic sense. He realizes that the true satisfaction of life lies in imaginative conflict. Whatever their ultimate purpose, men are alive only while they struggle. When they grow aware of the futility of their effort, and yet strive to fashion something from it, they become noble and tragic. Such is Hardy; but his despair is mitigated by tenderness and pity for his fellows. . . . With a wistful understanding he surveys the human scene."

No consideration of Hardy could end on a finer coda.

Three excellent studies of Hardy, presenting the novelist and poet from three distinctly different points of view, are those by Lionel Johnson (1894), Lascelles Abercrombie (1912) and Ernst Brennecke (1925).

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

Only a man harrowing clods
  In a slow silent walk,
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
  Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
  From the heaps of couch grass:
Yet this will go onward the same
  Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
  Come whispering by;
War's annals will fade into night
  Ere their story die.

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leaned upon a coppice gate
  When Frost was specter-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
  The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
  Like strings from broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
  Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
  The Century's corpse outleant;
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
  The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
  Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
  Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice burst forth among
  The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
  Of joy unlimited;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

THE MAN HE KILLED

"Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand-like—just as I—
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat, if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown."

IN THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

"Man, you too, aren't you, one of these rough followers of the criminal?
All hanging hereabout to gather how he's going to bear
Examination in the hall." She flung disdainful glances on
The shabby figure standing at the fire with others there,
Who warmed them by its flare.

"No, indeed, my skipping maiden: I know nothing of the trial here,
Or criminal, if so he be.—I chanced to come this way,
And the fire shone out into the dawn, and morning airs are cold now;
I, too, was drawn in part by charms I see before me play,
That I see not every day."

"Ha, ha!" then laughed the constables who also stood to warm themselves,
The while another maiden scrutinized his features hard,
As the blaze threw into contrast every knot and line that wrinkled them,
Exclaiming, "Why, last night when he was brought in by the guard,
You were with him in the yard!"

"Nay, nay, you teasing wench, I say! You know you speak mistakenly.
Cannot a tired pedestrian who has legged it long and far
Here on his way from northern parts, engrossed in humble marketings,
Come in and rest awhile, although judicial doings are
Afoot by morning star?"

"O, come, come!" laughed the constables. "Why, man, you speak the dialect
He uses in his answers; you can hear him up the stairs.
So own it. We sha'n't hurt ye. There he's speaking now! His syllables
Are those you sound yourself when you are talking unawares,
As this pretty girl declares."

"And you shudder when his chain clinks!" she rejoined. "O yes, I noticed it.
And you winced, too, when those cuffs they gave him echoed to us here.
They'll soon be coming down, and you may then have to defend yourself
Unless you hold your tongue, or go away and keep you clear
When he's led to judgment near!"

"No! I'll be damned in hell if I know anything about the man!
No single thing about him more than everybody knows!
Must not I even warm my hands but I am charged with blasphemies?" . . .
—His face convulses as the morning cock that moment crows,
And he droops, and turns, and goes.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

"I have finished another year," said God,
"In gray, green, white and brown;
I have strewn the leaf upon the sod,
Sealed up the worm within the clod,
And let the last sun down."

"And what's the good of it?" I said,
"What reasons made you call
From formless void this earth we tread,
When nine-and-ninety can be read
Why nought should be at all?

"Yea, Sire; why shaped you us, 'who in
This tabernacle groan'—
If ever a joy be found herein,
Such joy no man had wished to win
If he had never known!"

Then he: "My labors—logicless—
You may explain; not I:
Sense-sealed I have wrought, without a guess
That I evolved a Consciousness
To ask for reasons why.

"Strange that ephemeral creatures who
By my own ordering are,
Should see the shortness of my view,
Use ethic tests I never knew,
Or made provision for!"

He sank to raptness as of yore,
And opening New Year's Day
Wove it by rote as theretofore,
And went on working evermore
In his unweeting way.

WEATHERS

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside the "Traveler's Rest,"
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the South and West,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

'AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY GRAVE?"

"Ah, are you digging on my grave
My beloved one?—planting rue?"
—"No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred,
'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,
'That I should not be true.'"

"Then who is digging on my grave?
My nearest, dearest kin?"
—"Ah, no: they sit and think, 'What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death's gin.'"

"But some one digs upon my grave?
My enemy?—prodding sly?"
—"Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie."

"Then, who is digging on my grave?
Say—since I have not guessed!"
—"O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?"

"Ah, yes! *You* dig upon my grave. . . .
Why flashed it not on me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog's fidelity!"

"Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting-place."

FIVE "SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE"

IN CHURCH

"And now to God the Father," he ends,
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles:
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.

Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door,
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile
And reënact at the vestry-glass
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show
That had moved the congregation so.

BY HER AUNT'S GRAVE

"Sixpence a week," says the girl to her lover,
"Aunt used to bring me, for she could confide
In me alone, she vowed. It was to cover
The cost of her headstone when she died.
And that was a year ago last June;
I've not yet fixed it. But I must soon."

"And where is the money now, my dear?"
"O, snug in my purse. . . . Aunt was *so* slow
In saving it—eighty weeks, or near." . . .
"Let's spend it," he hints. "For she won't know.
There's a dance tonight at the *Load of Hay*."
She passively nods. And they go that way.

AT THE ALTAR-RAIL

"My bride is not coming, alas!" says the groom,
And the telegram shakes in his hand. "I own
It was hurried! We met at a dancing-room
When I went to the Cattle-Show alone,
And then, next night, where the Fountain leaps,
And the Street of the Quarter-Circle sweeps.

"Aye, she won me to ask her to be my wife—
'Twas foolish perhaps!—to forsake the ways
Of the flaring town for a farmer's life.
She agreed. And we fixed it. Now she says:

'It's sweet of you, dear, to prepare me a nest,
But a swift, short, gay life suits me best.
What I really am you have never gleaned;
I had eaten the apple ere you were weaned.' "

IN THE RESTAURANT

"But hear. If you stay, and the child be born,
It will pass as your husband's with the rest,
While, if we fly, the teeth of scorn
Will be gleaming at us from east to west;
And the child will come as a life despised.
I feel an elopement is ill-advised!"

"O you realize not what it is, my dear,
To a woman! Daily and hourly alarms
Lest the truth should out. How can I stay here
And nightly take him into my arms!
Come to the child no name or fame,
Let us go, and face it, and bear the shame."

AT THE DRAPER'S

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear,
But you did not perceive me.
Well, when they deliver what you were shown
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said,
"O, I didn't see you come in there—
Why couldn't you speak?"—"Well, I didn't. I left
That you should not notice I'd been there.

"You were viewing some lovely things. *'Soon required*
For a widow, of latest fashion';
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man
Who had to be cold and ashen

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you
'In the last new note in mourning,'
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,
I left you to your adorning."

A PLACID MAN'S EPITAPH

As for my life, I've led it
With fair content and credit:
It said: "Take this." I took it:
Said: "Leave." And I forsook it.
If I had done without it
None would have cared about it,
Or said: "One has refused it
Who might have meetly used it."

AFTERWARDS

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbors say,
"He was a man who used to notice such things"?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
"To him this must have been a familiar sight."

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, "He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he is gone."

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
"He was one who had an eye for such mysteries"?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
"He hears it not now, but used to notice such things"?

WINTER IN DURNOVER FIELD

SCENE.—*A wide stretch of fallow ground recently sown with wheat, and frozen to iron hardness. Three large birds walking about thereon, and wistfully eyeing the surface. Wind keen from north-east: sky a dull gray.*

Rook: Throughout the field I find no grain;
The cruel frost encrusts the cornland!
Starling: Aye: patient pecking now is vain
Throughout the field, I find . . .
Rook: No grain!
Pigeon: Nor will be, comrade, till it rain,
Or genial thawings loose the lorn land
Throughout the field.
Rook: I find no grain:
The cruel frost encrusts the cornland!

THE ROMAN ROAD

The Roman Road runs straight and bare
As the pale parting-line in hair
Across the heath. And thoughtful men
Contrast its days of Now and Then,
And delve, and measure, and compare;

Visioning on the vacant air
Helmed legionnaires, who proudly rear
The Eagle, as they pace again
The Roman Road.

But no tall brass-helmed legionnaire
Haunts it for me. Uprises there
A mother's form upon my ken,
Guiding my infant steps, as when
We walked that ancient thoroughfare,
The Roman Road.

THE TREE AND THE LADY

I have done all I could
For that lady I knew! Through the heats I have shaded her,
Drawn to her songsters when summer has jaded her,
Home from the heath or the wood.

At the mirth-time of May,
When my shadow first lured her, I'd donned my new bravery
Of greenth: 'twas my all. Now I shiver in slavery,
Icicles grieving me gray.

Plumed to every twig's end
I could tempt her chair under me. Much did I treasure her
During those days she had nothing to pleasure her;
Mutely she used me as friend.

I'm a skeleton now,
And she's gone, craving warmth. The rime sticks like skin to me;
Through me Arcturus peers; Nor'lights shoot into me;
Gone is she, scorning my bough!

SNOW IN THE SUBURBS

Every branch big with it,
Bent every twig with it;
Every fork like a white web-foot;
Every street and pavement mute:
Some flakes have lost their way, and grope back upward, when
Meeting those meandering down they turn and descend again.
The palings are glued together like a wall,
And there is no waft of wind with the fleecy fall.

A sparrow enters the tree
Whereon immediately
A snow-lump thrice his own slight size
Descends on him and showers his head and eyes.
And overturns him,
And near inurns him,
And lights on a nether twig, when its brush
Starts off a volley of other lodging lumps with a rush.

The steps are a blanched slope,
Up which, with feeble hope,
A black cat comes, wide-eyed and thin;
And we take him in.

"MY SPIRIT WILL NOT HAUNT THE MOUND"

My spirit will not haunt the mound
Above my breast,
But travel, memory-possessed,
To where my tremulous being found
Life largest, best.

My phantom-footed shape will go
When nightfall grays
Hither and thither along the ways
I and another used to know
In backward days.

And there you'll find me, if a jot
You still should care
For me, and for my curious air;
If otherwise, then I shall not,
For you, be there.

THE DARK-EYED GENTLEMAN

I pitched my day's leazings [1] in Crimmercrock Lane,
To tie up my garter and jog on again,
When a dear dark-eyed gentleman passed there and said,
In a way that made all o' me color rose-red,
"What do I see—
O pretty knee!"
And he came and he tied up my garter for me.

'Twixt sunset and moonrise it was, I can mind:
Ah, 'tis easy to lose what we nevermore find!—
Of the dear stranger's home, of his name, I knew nought,
But I soon knew his nature and all that it brought.
Then bitterly
Sobbed I that he
Should ever have tied up my garter for me!

[1] "Leazings"; bundles of gleaned corn.

Yet now I've beside me a fine lissom lad,
And my slip's nigh forgot, and my days are not sad;
My own dearest joy is he, comrade, and friend,
He it is who safe-guards me, on him I depend;
No sorrow brings he,
And thankful I be
That his daddy once tied up my garter for me!

THE SUBALTERNS

"Poor wanderer," said the leaden sky,
"I fain would lighten thee,
But there be laws in force on high
Which say it must not be."

"I would not freeze thee, shorn one," cried
The North, "knew I but how
To warm my breath, to slack my stride;
But I am ruled as thou."

"Tomorrow I attack thee, wight,"
Said Sickness. "Yet I swear
I bear thy little ark no spite,
But am bid enter there."

"Come hither, Son," I heard Death say;
"I did not will a grave
Should end thy pilgrimage today,
But I, too, am a slave!"

We smiled upon each other then,
And life to me wore less
Of that fell guise it wore ere when
They owned their passiveness.

THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock,
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If some one said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton [1] by yonder coomb [2]
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

WAITING BOTH

A star looks down at me,
And says: "Here I and you
Stand, each in our degree:
What do you mean to do—
Mean to do?"

I say: "For all I know,
Wait, and let Time go by,
Till my change come."—"Just so,"
The star says: "So mean I—
So mean I."

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was born at Petworth House, Crawley, Sussex, in 1840. He was educated at St. Mary's College, Oscott, and was a member of the diplomatic service from 1858 to 1870. He spent many years in the East, his observations making him strongly sympathetic to lesser nationalities and all the down-trodden. Traveling in North Africa, Asia Minor and Arabia in the late seventies, all he saw caused him to support the Islamic movement, and to oppose the British government's control until his death. He favored the cause of the Egyptians; his voice was lifted

[1] Barton: farmyard.
[2] Coomb: valley, hollow.

for justice to Ireland; he joined Lloyd George in condemning the Boer war.

As a poet, he is best known by his *The Love Sonnets of Proteus* (1881) and *The New Pilgrimage* (1889). Both volumes reveal a deep, philosophical nature expressing itself in terms of high seriousness. A collected edition of his works was published in 1914, and, in 1923, *Selected Poems*, edited by Floyd Dell, was brought out in America.

His remarkable *My Diaries* [*1888-1914*] appeared when Blunt was an octogenarian, in 1921; a work which its British publisher quickly withdrew from the market because of its blunt revelations of British secret diplomacy. Shortly before his death, he wrote, "I have lived my life in full. No life is perfect that has not been lived youth in feeling, manhood in battle, old age in meditation." Blunt died in London, September 11, 1922.

Although Blunt produced a considerable body of verse, little of it survives. His experiments in assonance and echoing vowels are interesting mainly to the technician; his sonnet sequences, for all their attempts at dramatic narration, are sadly "dated." Three or four of his sonnets have the ring of true metal, and "The Desolate City" moves like an ebbing melody. However, says T. Earle Welby in *A Popular History of English Poetry*, "to have married Byron's granddaughter, bred Arab horses, and been admired by Henley and George Wyndham is to have made a great deal of life."

ON THE SHORTNESS OF TIME

If I could live without the thought of death,
Forgetful of time's waste, the soul's decay,
I would not ask for other joy than breath
With light and sound of birds and the sun's ray.
I could sit on untroubled day by day
Watching the grass grow, and the wild flowers range
From blue to yellow and from red to gray
In natural sequence as the seasons change.
I could afford to wait, but for the hurt
Of this dull tick of time which chides my ear.
But now I dare not sit with loins ungirt
And staff unlifted, for death stands too near.
I must be up and doing—aye, each minute.
The grave gives time for rest when we are in it.

THE TWO HIGHWAYMEN

I long have had a quarrel set with Time
Because he robb'd me. Every day of life
Was wrested from me after bitter strife:
I never yet could see the sun go down
But I was angry in my heart, nor hear
The leaves fall in the wind without a tear
Over the dying summer. I have known
No truce with Time nor Time's accomplice, Death.
The fair world is the witness of a crime
Repeated every hour. For life and breath
Are sweet to all who live; and bitterly
The voices of these robbers of the heath
Sound in each ear and chill the passer-by.
—What have we done to thee, thou monstrous Time?
What have we done to Death that we must die?

THE DESOLATE CITY

Dark to me is the earth. Dark to me are the heavens.
Where is she that I loved, the woman with eyes like stars?
Desolate are the streets. Desolate is the city.
A city taken by storm, where none are left but the slain.

Sadly I rose at dawn, undid the latch of my shutters,
Thinking to let in light, but I only let in love.
Birds in the boughs were awake; I listen'd to their chaunting;
Each one sang to his love; only I was alone.

This, I said in my heart, is the hour of life and of pleasure.
Now each creature on earth has his joy, and lives in the sun,
Each in another's eyes finds light, the light of compassion,
This is the moment of pity, this is the moment of love.

Speak, O desolate city! Speak, O silence in sadness!
Where is she that I loved in my strength, that spoke to my soul?
Where are those passionate eyes that appeal'd to my eyes in passion?
Where is the mouth that kiss'd me, the breast I laid to my own?

Groping I went, as blind. I sought her house, my belovèd's.
There I stopp'd at the silent door, and listen'd and tried the latch.
Love, I cried, dost thou slumber? This is no hour for slumber,
This is the hour of love, and love I bring in my hand.

I knew the house, with its windows barr'd, and its leafless fig-tree,
Climbing round by the doorstep, the only one in the street;
I knew where my hope had climb'd to its goal and there encircled
All that those desolate walls once held, my belovèd's heart.

There in my grief she consoled me. She loved me when I loved not
She put her hand in my hand, and set her lips to my lips.
She told me all her pain and show'd me all her trouble.
I, like a fool, scarce heard, hardly return'd her kiss.

Weeping strangled my voice. I call'd out, but none answer'd;
Blindly the windows gazed back at me, dumbly the door;
She whom I love, who loved me, look'd not on my yearning,
Gave me no more her hands to kiss, show'd me no more her soul.

Therefore the earth is dark to me, the sunlight blackness,
Therefore I go in tears and alone, by night and day;
Therefore I find no love in heaven, no light, no beauty,
A heaven taken by storm, where none are left but the slain!

FAREWELL

Farewell, then. It is finished. I forgo
With this all right in you, even that of tears.
If I have spoken hardly, it will show
How much I loved you. With you disappears
A glory, a romance of many years.
What you may be henceforth I will not know.
The phantom of your presence on my fears
Is impotent at length for weal or woe.

Your past, your present, all alike must fade
In a new land of dreams where love is not.
Then kiss me and farewell. The choice is made
And we shall live to see the past forgot,
If not forgiven. See, I came to curse,
Yet stay to bless. I know not which is worse.

LAUGHTER AND DEATH

There is no laughter in the natural world
Of beast or fish or bird, though no sad doubt
Of their futurity to them unfurled
Has dared to check the mirth-compelling shout.
The lion roars his solemn thunder out
To sleeping woods. The eagle screams her cry.
Even the lark must strain a serious throat
To hurl his blest defiance at the sky.

Fear, anger, jealousy, have found a voice.
Love's pain or rapture the brute bosoms swell.
Nature has symbols for her nobler joys,
Her nobler sorrows. Who has dared foretell
That only man, by some sad mockery,
Should learn to laugh who learns that he must die?

AUSTIN DOBSON

(Henry) Austin Dobson was born at Plymouth, in 1840, and was educated in Wales and on the Continent. In 1856, he received a clerkship in The Board of Trade and remained in official life a great part of his life.

His first collection, *Vignettes in Rhyme* (1873), attracted attention by the ease with which the author managed his dexterous and most difficult effects. With *Proverbs in Porcelain* (1877), *Old World Idylls* (1883), and *At the Sign of the Lyre* (1885), it was evident that a new master of *vers de société* had arisen. The crispness and clean delicacy of his verse make him the peer of Prior, Praed and sometimes of Thomas Hood.

During the latter part of his life, he devoted himself to a type of semi-biographical essay, intended to preserve the spirit of some nearly or wholly forgotten celebrity. In this form, his prose is scarcely less distinctive than his verse; his detailed and charmingly

dispensed knowledge of the time of Queen Anne gives to his writings its own special flavor of "archaic gentility."

His *Complete Poetical Works,* contained in a volume of over five hundred closely printed pages, display his resourcefulness in all modes, especially the French forms. Although most of his rhymes are charming rather than profound, certain pages, like the famous rondeau "In After Days" and "Before Sedan," are memorable for their serious clarity. "Ars Victrix" is something more than an admonition; it is a craftsman's confession of faith which any artist might heed.

Once in a while, as in "The Prayer of the Swine to Circe" and "The Sick Man and the Birds," Dobson attempted a note wholly solemn, but in spite of the occasional pathos masked in graceful dominos, he is enjoyed most—and deservedly so—for the frivolous triolets made of rose-leaves and the ballades compounded of nothing graver than "the ripple of laughing rhyme."

Dobson died at the height of his popularity, September 3, 1921.

"FAREWELL, RENÒWN!"

Farewell, Renown! Too fleeting flower,
That grows a year to last an hour;
  Prize of the race's dust and heat,
  Too often trodden under feet,—
Why should I court your "barren dower"?

Nay; had I Dryden's angry power,
The thews of Ben, the wind of Gower,
  Not less my voice should still repeat
    "Farewell, Renown!"

Farewell! Because the Muses' bower
Is filled with rival brows that lower;
  Because, howe'er his pipe be sweet,
  The Bard, that "pays," must please the street;
But most . . . because the grapes are sour—
    "Farewell, Renown!"

BEFORE SEDAN

"The dead hand clasped a letter."
—Special Correspondence.

Here in this leafy place
  Quiet he lies,
Cold with his sightless face
  Turned to the skies;
'Tis but another dead;
All you can say is said.

Carry his body hence,—
  Kings must have slaves;
Kings climb to eminence
  Over men's graves:
So this man's eye is dim;—
Throw the earth over him.

What was the white you touched,
  There, at his side?
Paper his hand had clutched
  Tight ere he died;—
Message or wish, may be;
Smooth the folds out and see.

Hardly the worst of us
  Here could have smiled!
Only the tremulous
  Words of a child;
Prattle, that has for stops
Just a few ruddy drops.

Look. She is sad to miss,
  Morning and night,
His—her dead father's—kiss;
  Tries to be bright,
Good to mamma, and sweet.
That is all. "Marguerite."

Ah, if beside the dead
  Slumbered the pain!
Ah, if the hearts that bled
  Slept with the slain!
If the grief died;—but no.
Death will not have it so.

ARS VICTRIX

(*Imitated from Théophile Gautier*)

Yes; when the ways oppose—
  When the hard means rebel,
Fairer the work out-grows,—
  More potent far the spell.

O Poet, then, forbear
  The loosely sandaled verse,
Choose rather thou to wear
  The buskin—strait and terse;

Leave to the tyro's hand
  The limp and shapeless style,
See that thy form demand
  The labor of the file.

Sculptor, do thou discard
  The yielding clay, consign
To Paros marble hard
  The beauty of thy line;

Model thy Satyr's face
  For bronze of Syracuse;
In the veined agate trace
  The profile of thy Muse.

Painter, that still must mix
  But transient tints anew,
Thou in the furnace fix
  The firm enamel's hue.

All passes. Art alone
  Enduring stays to us;
The Bust outlasts the throne,
  The Coin, Tiberius;

Even the gods must go;
  Only the lofty Rhyme
Not countless years o'erthrow,
  Not long array of time.

Paint, chisel, then, or write;
  But, that the work surpass,
With the hard fashion fight,
  With the resisting mass.

ROSE-LEAVES

A KISS

Rose kissed me today.
Will she kiss me tomorrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me today
But the pleasure gives way
  To a savor of sorrow.
Rose kissed me today,—
  Will she kiss me tomorrow?

A GREEK GIFT

Here's a present for Rose,
  How pleased she is looking!
Is it verse? Is it prose?
  Here's a present for Rose!
"*Plats*," "*Entrées*," and "*Rôts*,"—
  Why, it's "Gouffé on Cooking"!
Here's a present for Rose,
  How *pleased* she is looking.

"URCEUS EXIT"

I intended an Ode,
  And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began à la mode,
I intended an Ode;
But Rose crossed the road
  In her latest new bonnet;
I intended an Ode;
  And it turned to a Sonnet.

IN VAIN TODAY

In vain today I scrape and blot:
  The nimble words, the phrases neat,
  Decline to mingle or to meet;
My skill is all foregone—forgot.

He will not canter, walk nor trot,
  My Pegasus. I spur, I beat,
    In vain today!

And yet 'twere sure the saddest lot
  That I should fail to leave complete
  One poor . . . the rhyme suggests "conceit!"
Alas! 'Tis all too clear I'm not
    In *vein* today.

THE BALLADE OF PROSE AND RHYME

When the ways are heavy with mire and rut,
  In November fogs, in December snows,
When the North Wind howls, and the doors are shut,—
  There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
  But whenever a scent from the whitethorn blows,
And the jasmine-stars at the casement climb,
  And a Rosalind-face at the lattice shows,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,
  When the reason stands on its squarest toes,
When the mind (like a beard) has a "formal cut,"—
  There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
  But whenever the May-blood stirs and glows,
And the young year draws to the "golden prime,"
  And Sir Romeo sticks in his ear a rose,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

In a theme where the thoughts have a pedant-strut,
  In a changing quarrel of "Ayes" and "Noes,"
In a starched procession of "If" and "But,"—
  There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
  But wherever a soft glance softer grows,
And the light hours dance to the trysting-time,
  And the secret is told "that no one knows,"
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

Envoy

In the work-a-day world, for its needs and woes,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
But whenever the May-bells clash and chime,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

IN AFTER DAYS

In after days when grasses high
O'ertop the stone where I shall lie,
  Though ill or well the world adjust
  My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind's sigh;
  I shall be mute, as all men must
    In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying—"He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

CHARLES DOUGHTY

Charles (Montagu) Doughty was born in 1843 at Suffolk, and his eighty-three years were filled with a variety and strangeness rare in the strangest and most varied of lives. He studied for the law; then decided to enter the navy; turned from the sea to science, pursuing his studies in geology through three universities. His educational career was equally mixed. He attended Cambridge and Oxford; went abroad to the universities of Leyden and Louvain. His travels brought him to Norway, where he lived a year, to Italy where he remained for several years, to France, Spain, Greece, Tunis and Algeria. It was in Damascus he discovered a passion that was to last him the rest of his life: the passion for Arabia. After learning different Arabic dialects, he joined a caravan to make researches in old stone inscriptions. He became separated from his companions, wandered in the desert for two years, was taken prisoner, was released and, after almost fatal escapades, kept himself alive by treating sick Arabs with a small supply of drugs he had maintained.

In Doughty's late thirties, he began compiling, from notebooks kept during travel, his large prose work. In 1888 *Travels in Arabia Deserta* was first published. Though formidable in proportion and difficult in style, the book was recognized as a masterpiece. Its idiom proved the chief barrier to popularity—the language being a mixture of heavy Orientalism and early English archaism—and twenty years later Edward Garnett undertook an abridgement of the *magnum opus,* issuing it under the title of *Wanderings in Arabia* (1908). No book before or since—including T. E. Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert* (1927)—has interpreted Arabia with such vivid power and indubitable authority.

Doughty's poetry—of which seven volumes appeared before his death—presents to the casual reader the same obstacles as his prose. *Dawn in Britain* (1906), the most imposing of his verse, *Adam Cast Forth* (1908), *The Titans* (1916), *Mansoul, or The Riddle of the World* (1920) are so rankly overgrown with archaic eccentricities as to seem, at first glance, impenetrable. But once Doughty's code is deciphered the reader is rewarded with a mes-

sage whose whole import may still elude him, but whose impact is unquestionable. This is a poetry of accretion and accumulation, not a poetry of telling details. It is so knit in a kind of gnarled unity, so intricately epic, that brief quotation is impossible; one must go to any of his volumes—preferably to *Dawn in Britain*—to get the first full flavor of his quality.

Doughty died in his eighty-fourth year, in 1926.

*

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

The Irish-English singer, Arthur (William Edgar) O'Shaughnessy, was born in London in 1844. He was connected, for a while, with the British Museum, and was transferred later to the Department of Natural History. His first literary success, *Epic of Women* (1870), promised a splendid future for the young poet, a promise strengthened by *Music and Moonlight* (1874). Always delicate in health, his hopes were dashed by periods of illness and an early death in London in 1881.

The poems here reprinted, like all of O'Shaughnessy's, owe much to their editors. The "Ode," which is one of the classics of his age, originally had seven verses, the last four being mediocre tuneful versifying. When Palgrave compiled his *Golden Treasury*, he recognized the great difference between the first three inspired stanzas and the others—and calmly and courageously dropped the final four.

William Alexander Percy recently performed a similar service for this singer who, nine-tenths of the time, was an undistinguished minor poet. It is a series of liberties he has taken in his *Poems of Arthur O'Shaughnessy* (1922), but the editorial omissions are justifiable. As he says, "in O'Shaughnessy's case, it is the only way to save him from himself and for posterity." One hesitates to approve such cavalier disposals; one would like to believe that a poet should be protected against editorial excisions. But no one ever called for the blue pencil more imperatively than O'Shaughnessy. He allowed his melodic stream, thin at the best, to trickle out into the merest flow of sound and all but disappear in rivulets of rhyme.

ODE

We are the music-makers,
  And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
  And sitting by desolate streams;

World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

THE NEW LOVE AND THE OLD

I made another garden, yea,
For my new Love:
I left the dead rose where it lay
And set the new above.
Why did my Summer not begin?
Why did my heart not haste?
My old Love came and walk'd therein,
And laid the garden waste.

She enter'd with her weary smile,
Just as of old;
She look'd around a little while
And shiver'd with the cold:
Her passing touch was death to all,
Her passing look a blight;
She made the white rose-petals fall,
And turn'd the red rose white.

Her pale robe clinging to the grass
  Seem'd like a snake
That bit the grass and ground, alas!
  And a sad trail did make.
She went up slowly to the gate,
  And then, just as of yore,
She turn'd back at the last to wait
  And say farewell once more.

DOOM

In either mood, to bless or curse
  God bringeth forth the breath of man;
No angel sire, no woman nurse
  Shall change the work that God began.

One spirit shall be like a star,
  He shall delight to honor one:
Another spirit he shall mar:
  None shall undo what God hath done.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844, became a Jesuit, and was an instructor in Greek and Greek meters at University College in Dublin. Although he wrote much during an intensely spiritual life, none of his poetry appeared during his lifetime, and it was not until thirty years after his death that his extraordinary verse was collected. Hopkins died in 1898 and the world was not given the *Poems of Gerard Hopkins, Now First Published, with Notes by Robert Bridges* until 1919. Many of the verses in this posthumous volume were deciphered from manuscript by the Poet-Laureate and it is to him that one must be grateful for rescuing the work of a most original though complicated mind from oblivion.

A reader of Hopkins should expect obstacles; he must be prepared for difficulties that, at first, seem insuperable. He must be willing to accept a series of musical dissonances, compared to which the most cacophonous passages in Browning are limpid and bird-like. He must penetrate obscurities which are cloudy to the point of being unintelligible. But he will be rewarded. Behind the tortured constructions and heaped-up epithets there is magnificence. In spite of the verbal excesses and idiomatic oddities there

is an originality of vision which is nothing less than startling. In its intimate fancifulness, the imagery is sometimes reminiscent of the more controlled extravagances of Emily Dickinson. Like the New England poetess, Hopkins' poetry is sometimes eccentric, but it is always logical, never arbitrary or perverse.

Hopkins himself worked out a curious scheme of prosody (he even invented a system of signs to make plain the effects he wished to achieve) and his lines (as his own preface tells us) are "written in Running Rhythm, the common rhythm in English use, some in Sprung Rhythm (a free beat strongly suggestive of later *vers libre*) and some in a mixture of both." The peculiar beauty in his poems makes it lamentable that Hopkins (to quote his editor) "died when, to judge by his latest work, he was beginning to concentrate the force of all his luxuriant experiments in rhythm and diction, and castigate his art into a more reserved style." Even in the cloudiest of his effects there is a splendor, a rush of rhyme, a cataract of color, attained by scarcely any of his plainer-speaking contemporaries.

Even the most outspoken admirer of this highly imaginative and highly elliptical poetry must admit its structural awkwardness. Hopkins himself wrote, "No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness. I hope in time to have a more balanced and Miltonic style. But as air, melody, is what strikes me most of all in music, and design in painting, so design, pattern, or what I am in the habit of calling *inscape* is what above all I aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern, or 'inscape' to be distinctive, and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer. This vice I cannot have escaped." Yet Dr. Robert Bridges has made too much of Hopkins' mannerisms. If these poems, Bridges comments, "were to be arraigned for errors of what might be called taste, they might be convicted of occasional affectation in metaphor, as where the hills are 'as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet' " . . . As Robert Graves and Laura Riding inquire in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, "Why cannot what Dr. Bridges calls a fault of taste, an affectation, in the description of hills as 'a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet' be, with the proper sympathy for Hopkins' enthusiasm, appreciated as a phrase reconciling the two seemingly opposed qualities of mountains, their male, animal-like roughness and strength and, at the same time, their ethereal quality under soft light for which the violet in the gentle eye of the horse makes exactly the proper association?"

Continually daring, his work has never the note of ostentatious bravado. His boldness is instinctive; even such extraordinary departures as "Hurrahing in Harvest" and "Felix Randal" are extensions of the sonnet form but not violations of its spirit.

Hopkins' epithets may seem erratic but they are actually if oddly precise. As with his punctuation, he could give a rule for everything, even for the frequent and deliberate omission of the relative pronoun which he dropped not only "to crowd out every merely grammatical or toneless element" but to stress the heavy accents of his verse. "The Habit of Perfection," "The Golden Echo," its companion piece, "The Leaden Echo," and "God's Grandeur" will not be shaken out of the mind. If "emphasis seems to oust euphony" in a struggle of intense contractions, his style, pushed by the extremities of his theories, is a triumph of elisions. Far from being a "fascinating failure" (T. Earle Welby's summary), his poetry lifts exact if unfamiliar verity of phrase to a burning beauty.

PIED BEAUTY

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies as couple-colored as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscapes plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plow;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise Him.

THE HABIT OF PERFECTION

Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorlèd ear,
Pipe me to pastures still, and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb;
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shellèd, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light:
This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hatch of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine:
The can must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers send
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy sward,
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-colored clothes provide
Your spouse not labored-at nor spun.

THE LEADEN ECHO

How to keep—is there any any, is there none such, nowhere
known, some bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch
or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty, . . . from van-
ishing away?
Oh, is there no frowning of these wrinkles, ranked wrinkles
deep,
Down? no waving-off of these most mournful messengers, still
messengers, sad and stealing messengers of gray?
No, there's none, there's none—oh, no, there's none!
Nor can you long be, what you now are, called fair—
Do what you may do, do what you may,
And wisdom is early to despair:
Be beginning; since, no, nothing can be done
To keep at bay
Age and age's evils—hoar hair,
Ruck and wrinkle, drooping, dying, death's worst, winding
sheets, tombs and worms and tumbling to decay;
So be beginning, be beginning to despair.
Oh, there's none—no, no, no, there's none:

Be beginning to despair, to despair,
Despair, despair, despair, despair.

THE GOLDEN ECHO

Spare!
There is one, yes, I have one (Hush there!);
Only not within seeing of the sun,
Not within the singeing of the strong sun,
Tall sun's tingeing, or treacherous the tainting of the earth's air,
Somewhere elsewhere there is ah, well, where! one,
One. Yes, I can tell such a key, I do know such a place,
Where whatever's prized and passed of us, everything that's fresh and fast-flying of us, seems to us sweet of us and swiftly away with, done away with, undone,
Undone, done with, soon done with, and yet dearly and dangerously sweet
Of us, the wimpled-water-dimpled, not-by-morning-matchèd face,
The flower of beauty, fleece of beauty, too too apt to, ah! to fleet,
Never fleets more, fastened with the tenderest truth
To its own best being and its loveliness of youth: it is an everlastingness of, O it is an all youth!
Come then, your ways and airs and looks, locks, maiden gear, gallantry and gayety and grace,
Winning ways, airs innocent, maiden manners, sweet looks, loose locks, long locks, lovelocks, gaygear, going gallant, girlgrace—
Resign them, sign them, seal them, send them, motion them with breath,
And with sighs soaring, soaring sighs deliver
Then; beauty-in-the-ghost, deliver it, early now, long before death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver.
See; not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost; every hair
Is, hair of the head, numbered.

Nay, what we had lighthanded left in surely the mere mold
Will have waked and have waxed and have walked with the wind whatwhile we slept,
This side, that side hurling a heavyheaded hundredfold
What while we, while we slumbered.
O then, weary then why should we tread? O why are we so haggard at the heart, so care-coiled, care-killed, so fagged, so fashed, so cogged, so cumbered,
When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer, fonder
A care kept.—Where kept? Do but tell us where kept, where.—
Yonder.—What high as that! We follow, now we follow.—
Yonder, yes, yonder, yonder,
Yonder.

GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, mornings, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

THE STARLIGHT NIGHT

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!

The gray lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!
Ah, well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.
Buy then! bid then!—What?—Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like an orchard bough's!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

SPRING

Nothing is so beautiful as spring—
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden.—Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

HURRAHING IN HARVEST

Summer ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks rise
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behavior
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, willful-wavier
Meal-drift molded ever and melted across skies?

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,
Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder
Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!—
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

THE CAGED SKYLARK

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells—
That bird beyond the remembering his free fells;
This in drudgery, day-laboring-out life's age.

Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage,
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells
Or wring their barriers in bursts of fear or rage.

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest—
Why, hear him, hear him babble and drop down to his nest,
But his own nest, wild nest, no prison.

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,
But uncumbered: meadow-down is not distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.

FELIX RANDAL

Felix Randal the farrier, O he is dead then? my duty all ended,
Who have watched his mold of man, big-boned and hardy-handsome
Pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it and some
Fatal four disorders, fleshed there, all contended?

Sickness broke him. Impatient he cursed at first, but mended
Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some
Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom
Tendered to him. Ah, well, God rest him all road ever he offended!

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal;

How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous years,
When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,
Didst fettle for the great gray drayhorse his bright and battering sandal!

TO HIS WATCH

(*Unfinished*)

Mortal my mate, bearing my rock-a-heart
Warm beat with cold beat company, shall I
Earlier or you fail at our force, and lie
The ruins of, rifled, once a world of art?
The telling time our task is; time's some part,
Not all, but we were framed to fail and die—
One spell and well that one. There, ah, thereby
Is comfort's carol of all or woe's worst smart.

Field-flown the departed day no morning brings
Saying "This was yours" with her, but new one, worse,
And then that last and shortest . . .

"I HAVE DESIRED TO GO"

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail,
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb
And out of the swing of the sea.

Robert (Seymour) Bridges was born October 23, 1844. He was educated at Eton and Corpus Christi, Oxford, and, after having traveled, studied medicine, taking the post of Casualty Surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London. He retired from the medical profession in 1882, devoting himself entirely to literature. Although many more prominent poets were suggested for the office, the classic restraint of his verse won him the highest official honor: he became Poet Laureate in 1913. So often has the Laureateship been nothing more than a political prize that it is gratifying to observe that the award went to one distinguished for nothing more zealous than his art. As essayist, he wrote considerably for the Society of Pure English which, largely through his efforts, was founded in 1913.

The subjects of his many volumes are indicative of his expression; a few of the titles are: *Prometheus the Firegiver; Eros and Psyche; Achilles in Scyros; The Feast of Bacchus. Poems* appeared as early as 1873. His more recent work, although not strictly modern, is closer in spirit to our own time. The distinguishing features of his *Shorter Poems* (1894) are a subtlety of rhythm, a precise command of metrical delicacies. It is, in fact, as a metrician that his work is most interesting; even his most academic lines bear a beauty of pattern. Apart from the skill of versification, there are many delights for the most casual reader in his collected *Poetical Works* (excluding the dramas) which appeared in 1913.

Two more recent volumes, *October and Other Poems* (1920) and *New Poems* (1925), amplify the loveliness which lies just beneath the surface of Bridges' work.

Even those who have praised Bridges' work for its delicate music have been tardy in their acknowledgment of his subtle originality. Without straining for novelty, his balanced melodies continually surprise by their small departures from the singing line and their unexpected but just epithets.

Besides his creative work, Bridges has compiled two anthologies, *The Spirit of Man* (1916) and *The Chilswell Book of Poetry* (1924), and has collaborated in the editing of a hymnal.

In his eighty-sixth year, the poet laureate published his longest and what many consider his most important poem. *The Testament of Beauty* (1929) embodies a spirit scholarly but vital, radical at an age where conservatism is the norm; at one time authoritative and experimental. It is a philosophic rather than a lyric work, and, like Wordsworth's "Excursion" which probably influenced it, it is likely to be more discussed than examined. But its nobility is apparent to the most careless eye and, whether or not Bridges'

technical devices have permanence, the poem sustains its length, rising on a wave of spiritual optimism.

Bridges died after a short illness on April 21, 1930.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

The day begins to droop,—
  Its course is done:
But nothing tells the place
  Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,
  And up the lane
You may hear, but cannot see,
  The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums
  In the farm hard by:
Its lowering smoke is lost
  In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,
  And all night through
The dropping will not cease
  In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house
  Must keep his chair:
He knows he will never again
  Breathe the spring air:

His heart is worn with work;
  He is giddy and sick
If he rise to go as far
  As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,
  His hale, strong years;
And braves as he may the night
  Of darkness and tears.

LONDON SNOW

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
  Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down;
  Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
  All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
  And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marveled—marveled at the dazzling whiteness;
  The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.
  Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling;
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snow-balling;
  Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
"O look at the trees!" they cried. "O look at the trees!"
  With lessened load, a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder:
  When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
  For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
And trains of somber men, past tale of number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:
  But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labor and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm
    they have broken.

NIGHTINGALES

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

I HAVE LOVED FLOWERS

I have loved flowers that fade,
Within whose magic tents
Rich hues have marriage made
With sweet unmemoried scents:
A honeymoon delight,—
A joy of love at sight,
That ages in an hour:—
My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
Before their charm is writ
Along a liquid sky
Trembling to welcome it.
Notes, that with pulse of fire
Proclaim the spirit's desire,
Then die, and are nowhere:—
My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
And wither as a bloom:
Fear not a flowery death,
Dread not an airy tomb!
Fly with delight, fly hence!
'Twas thine love's tender sense
To feast; now on thy bier
Beauty shall shed a tear.

NIMIUM FORTUNATUS

I have lain in the sun,
I have toil'd as I might,
I have thought as I would,
And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep,
My heart of content
For friends that I met
The way that I went.

I welcome fatigue
While frenzy and care
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air.

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds
And the sun on the hill.

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake?

What good have I wrought?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it be earned;

For a happier lot
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be.

Andrew Lang, critic and essayist, was born March 31, 1844, at Selkirk, Scotland, and educated at Balliol College, Oxford. Besides his many well-known translations of Homer, Theocritus and the Greek Anthology, he has published numerous biographical works.

As a poet, his claim rests on his light verse. *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (1872), *Ballades in Blue China* (1880), and *Rhymes à la Mode* (1884) disclose Lang as a lesser Austin Dobson. His death occurred July 20, 1912.

As journalist, critic and historian, verse was his relaxation, Lang being particularly fond of the lightly summoned, lightly dispatched grace of the ballade and rondeau. Daintiness was the outstanding characteristic of his half-dozen books of rhyme, *Ballades in Blue China* being the best known.

Various monographs showed Lang's close study of historical details, especially those of the intrigues surrounding Mary Stuart. It is likely, however, that Lang will be remembered longest by none of his more original works, but by his excellent adaptations for children, the first of which, *The Blue Fairy Tale Book* (1889), was followed annually by other tales and romances in changing colors.

SCYTHE SONG

Mowers, weary and brown and blithe,
  What is the word, methinks, ye know,
Endless over-word that the Scythe
  Sings to the blades of the grass below?
Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
  Something, still, they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
  Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?

Hush, ah, hush, the Scythes are saying,
  Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;
Hush, they say to the grasses swaying;
  Hush, they sing to the clover deep!
Hush—'tis the lullaby Time is singing—
  Hush, and heed not, for all things pass;
Hush, ah, hush! and the Scythes are swinging
  Over the clover, over the grass!

THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
  Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
  In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Aeaean isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
  And only shadows of wan lovers pine—
  As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,—
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
  Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
    Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
    And through the music of the languid hours
They hear like Ocean on the western beach
  The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

Eugene (Jacob) Lee-Hamilton was born in London, January 6, 1845, and was educated partly in France and Germany, partly under tutors at home. Never in robust health, he was forced to leave Oriel College at Oxford without a degree, and, after various positions with the British Diplomatic Service abroad, had to retire from all active work. For twenty years, he was incapacitated and had to lie on his back, suffering from a nervous disease similar to that which kept Heine on his "mattress grave." He died in Italy, near Florence, on September 7, 1907.

In spite of his long illness, he was able to compose and dictate some ten volumes of verse, the earliest of which is *Poems and Transcripts* (1878). However, the work on which his reputation rests is a series of autobiographic poems, *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours* (1894), a sequence that displays his delicate skill in the classic form. In 1903, Lee-Hamilton made a selection from his own poems which appeared in "The Canterbury Poets" series with a preface by William Sharp.

ROMAN BATHS

There were some Roman baths where we spent hours:
  Immense and lonely courts of rock like brick,
  All overgrown with verdure strong and thick,
And girding sweet wild lawns all full of flowers.

One day, beneath the turf, green with the showers
  Of all the centuries since Genseric,
  They found rich pavements hidden by Time's trick,
Adorned with tritons, dolphins, doves like ours.

So, underneath the surface of Today,
  Lies yesterday, and what we call the Past,
The only thing which never can decay.

Things bygone are the only things that last:
  The Present is mere grass, quick-mown away:
The Past is stone, and stands for ever fast.

MICHAEL FIELD

Michael Field was the pen-name adopted by two women: an aunt, Katherine Harris Bradley, born in 1846, and her niece, Edith Emma Cooper, born in 1862. The affection between the two was unusually deep; it is evident that many of their poems were written to each other. But, during their lifetime, few discovered the secret of their disguise. Robert Browning was the first to hail Michael Field with enthusiasm, and the early work had a great vogue in the 'eighties. Reviewers hailed Field's *Callirhoë* as a work of genius; Swinburne and Meredith were lavish in praise of subsequent volumes. But—possibly due to the waning interest in classicism, possibly because of their overproductiveness—the twinned poets lost the public's interest and "the literary world," to quote Sturge Moore, "having been plunged into a disproportionate eagerness, next plunged into an equally unintelligent neglect."

Between 1887 and 1912, the two authors published more than twenty-five plays and eight volumes of poems; two other books were issued posthumously. In 1913, Edith Cooper died of cancer, a disease which she had concealed from her fellow-worker; a few months later, in 1914, the older, Katherine Bradley, died of the same illness.

The best known of Michael Field's volumes is the set of adaptations from Sappho entitled *Long Ago*. But, though the collections of their original verse suffer from unevenness and lack of condensation, a few lyrics, like the one beginning "I could wish to be dead," are poignantly direct and such an outcry as "Descent from the Cross" burns with an ecstatic fire. *The Accuser and Other*

Plays (1911) contains the most vivid of the dramas; *Dedicated* (1914) and *In the Name of Time* (1919) were issued after Field's death.

A Selection from the Poems of Michael Field with a Preface by T. Sturge Moore was published by The Poetry Bookshop in 1923. An invaluable study, *Michael Field*, the result of years of patient labor by Mary Sturgeon, appeared in 1922.

Though Michael Field's work can never be popular, it should not be neglected. Even the greater figures of the period cannot dwarf what is large and essentially noble in the best of the monologues and dramas. What militates against them is a preoccupied seriousness and a mood prevailingly overcast. This work is somber, for Michael Field was a tragic rather than a lyric poet, obsessed with the struggle of man against the apathy of nature. A carefully selected edition in one volume is needed in America to call attention to this poet. It is lamentable that a body of work so high in purpose, so rare in attainment remains practically unknown.

THE TRAGIC MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

I could wish to be dead!
Too quick with life were the tears I shed,
Too sweet for tears is the life I led;
And, ah, too lonesome my marriage-bed!
I could wish to be dead.

I could wish to be dead,
For just a word that rings in my head;
Too dear, too dear are the words he said,
They must never be rememberèd.
I could wish to be dead.

I could wish to be dead:
The wish to be loved is all mis-read,
And to love, one learns when one is wed,
Is to suffer bitter shame; instead
I could wish to be dead.

AFTER SOUFRIÈRE[1]

It is not grief or pain;
But like the even dropping of the rain,
That thou art gone.
It is not like a grave
To weep upon;
But like the rise and falling of a wave
When the vessel's gone.
It is like the sudden void
When the city is destroyed,
Where the sun shone:
There is neither grief nor pain,
But the wide waste come again.

TOO LATE

"O Virgins, very lovely in your troop,
O Virgins, very lovely, very white,
How is it that your lilies droop?
How is it that the lamps you bear are not alight?

"Why are you bending downward from the hill?
Bright is it on the hill as for a feast."
Trembling they sped as to fulfill
Some grievous prophecy; nor heeded me the least.

Downward they passed. . . . Oh, they were very fair,
But stricken as the frosted leaves to doom!
Their eyes I saw. . . . Bright with despair
Their eyes, and very lamps to light them to their doom.

Full were their looks of love and sorrowing
As they passed by me, shaking out a spell
Of sighs, of balms. And is it such a thing
Can be, that they were hurrying to Hell?

[1] T. Sturge Moore says: "I believe this title to refer to a volcanic cataclysm in which the town of Soufrière in Guadeloupe was destroyed, and which had occurred just before the poem was written."

METE ME OUT MY LONELINESS

Come, mete me out my loneliness, O wind,
For I would know
How far the living who must stay behind
Are from the dead who go.

Eternal Passer-by, I feel there is
In thee a stir,
A strength to span the yawning distances
From her gravestone to her.

MORE GOLD THAN GOLD

(*After Sappho*)

Yea, gold is son of Zeus: no rust
  Its timeless light can stain;
The worm that brings man's flesh to dust
  Assaults its strength in vain:
More gold than gold the love I sing,
A hard, inviolable thing.

Men say the passions should grow old
  With waning years; my heart
Is incorruptible as gold,
  'Tis my immortal part;
Nor is there any god can lay
On love the finger of decay.

DESCENT FROM THE CROSS[1]

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save thyself—come
  down!
Thou wilt be free as wind. None meeting thee will know
How thou wert hanging stark, my soul, outside the town,
Thou wilt fare to and fro;

[1] This poem is from *Poems of Adoration* (1912), which was entirely written (with the exception of a few pages) by Edith Cooper after her conversion.

Thy feet in grass will smell of faithful thyme; thy head. . . .
Think of the thorns, my soul—how thou wilt cast them off,
With shudder at the bleeding clench they hold!
But on their wounds thou wilt a balsam spread,
And over that a verdurous circle rolled
With gathered violets, sweet bright violets, sweet
As incense of the thyme on thy free feet;
A wreath thou wilt not give away, nor wilt thou doff.

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save thyself; yea, move
As scudding swans pass lithely on a seaward stream!
Thou wilt have everything; thou wert made great to love;
Thou wilt have ease for every dream;
No nails with fang will hold thy purpose to one aim;
There will be arbors round about thee, not one trunk
Against thy shoulders pressed and burning them with hate,
Yea, burning with intolerable flame.
O lips, such noxious vinegar have drunk,
There are, through valley-woods and mountain glades,
Rivers where thirst in naked prowess wades;
And there are wells in solitude whose chill no hour abates!

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save thyself! A sign
Thou wilt become to many as a shooting star.
They will believe thou art ethereal, divine,
When thou art where they are;
They will believe in thee and give thee feasts and praise.
They will believe thy power when thou hast loosed thy nails;
For power to them is fetterless and grand:
For destiny to them, along their ways,
Is one whose earthly Kingdom never fails.
Thou wilt be as a prophet or a king
In thy tremendous term of flourishing—
And thy hot royalty with acclamations fanned.

Come down from the Cross, my soul, and save thyself! . . . Beware!
Art thou not crucified with God, who is thy breath?
Wilt thou not hang as He while mockers laugh and stare?
Wilt thou not die His death?

Wilt thou not stay as He with nails and thorns and thirst?
Wilt thou not choose to conquer faith in His lone style?
Wilt thou not be with Him and hold thee still?
Voices have cried to him, *Come Down!* Accursed
And vain those voices, striving to beguile!
How heedless, solemn-gray in powerful mass,
Christ droops among the echoes as they pass!
O soul, remain with Him, with Him thy doom fulfill!

EDMUND GOSSE

Edmund (William) Gosse was born in London, 1849, son of Philip Henry Gosse, the naturalist. By his seventieth birthday Gosse was the author of some fifty volumes and the translator and editor of some thirty more. He died in 1928.

From 1867, when he became assistant librarian at the British Museum, Gosse spent his life among letters, creatively and critically. As a translator, his skill was soon apparent, his work in Scandinavian literature being especially authoritative. As a journalist, he was courted, flattered and feared, but his integrity was unquestioned.

Madrigals (1870), *On Viol and Flute* (1873), *Firdusi in Exile* (1886), *In Russet and Silver* (1894) and *Collected Poems* (1911) show talent rather than genius. The lyrics are easy to read and easy to remember though they are without a shock, scarcely a tremor of originality. But the music of "Lying in the Grass" (a favorite of the period) and other songs is as simple as it is sincere.

WITH A COPY OF HERRICK

Fresh with all airs of woodland brooks
  And scents of showers,
Take to your haunt of holy books
  This saint of flowers.

When meadows burn with budding May,
  And heaven is blue,
Before his shrine our prayers we say—
  Saint Robin true.

Love crowned with thorns is on his staff,
  Thorns of sweet briar;
His benediction is a laugh,
  Birds are his choir.

His sacred robe of white and red
Unction distills;
He hath a nimbus round his head
Of daffodils.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

William Ernest Henley was born August 23, 1849, at Gloucester, and was educated at the Grammar School of Gloucester. From childhood he was afflicted with a tuberculous disease which finally necessitated the amputation of a foot. His *Hospital Verses*, those vivid precursors of free verse, were a record of the time when he was at the infirmary at Edinburgh; they are sharp with the sights, sensations, even the actual smells, of the sick-room. In spite (or, more probably, because) of his continued poor health, Henley never ceased to worship strength and energy; courage and a triumphant belief in a harsh world shine out of the athletic *London Voluntaries* (1892) and the lightest lyrics in *Hawthorne and Lavender* (1901).

His buoyancy, rousing at first, becomes wearing; it is a little too insistent, a little shrill. When Henley ceased to overrate animal energy he was no less himself and a better poet. When not banging drums and flashing swords, he could distill the essence of a lyric, turn a triolet or ballade with the most expert practitioner of the French forms, paint impressionistic side-lights of intimate unturbulent London, and, in such pieces as "Madame Life," combine grim humor and gay *bizarrerie*.

The mixture of lightness and lustiness dates from his early youth. An infectious idiom, it flowered under his first influence which was that of his schoolmaster, T. E. Brown (see page 48) and remained to the end.

The bulk of Henley's poetry is not great in volume. He has himself explained the small quantity of his work in a Preface to his *Poems*, first published in 1888. "A principal reason," he says, "is that, after spending the better part of my life in the pursuit of poetry, I found myself (about 1877) so utterly unmarketable that I had to own myself beaten in art, and to indict myself to journalism for the next ten years." Later on, he began to write again—"old dusty sheaves were dragged to light; the work of selection and correction was begun; I burned much; I found that, after all, the lyrical instinct had slept—not died."

As editor he was fearless, prejudiced, violent in preferences and antipathies, and always sincere. His unflinching candor won over even those who completely disagreed with him. His friendships

were many, one of the closest being Robert Louis Stevenson, with whom he wrote three plays published in 1892. Though continually in conflict, he remained belligerent until 1894; in that year the death of his six-year-old daughter broke the heart of one whose head had been "bloody but unbowed."

In 1901 he published *Hawthorne and Lavender*, releasing a far finer though smaller music than he had ever uttered. His unrhymed rhythms, reminiscent of Heine's *North Sea* cycles, anticipated in color and accent the subsequent vogue of *vers libre*. Although he was not one of the great poets of his period, his period, as well as ours, would be incomplete without him.

After a brilliant and varied career (see Preface), devoted mostly to journalism, Henley died in 1903.

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
  Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
  For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
  I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
  My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
  Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
  Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
  How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
  I am the captain of my soul.

THE BLACKBIRD

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
    The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
    But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
Our hearts and lips together.

A BOWL OF ROSES

It was a bowl of roses:
There in the light they lay,
Languishing, glorying, glowing
Their life away.

And the soul of them rose like a presence,
Into me crept and grew,
And filled me with something—some one—
O, was it you?

BEFORE

Behold me waiting—waiting for the knife.
A little while, and at a leap I storm
The thick sweet mystery of chloroform,
The drunken dark, the little death-in-life.
The gods are good to me: I have no wife,
No innocent child, to think of as I near
The fateful minute; nothing all-too dear
Unmans me for my bout of passive strife.
Yet I am tremulous and a trifle sick,
And, face to face with chance, I shrink a little:
My hopes are strong, my will is something weak.
Here comes the basket? Thank you. I am ready
But, gentlemen my porters, life is brittle:
You carry Caesar and his fortunes—Steady!

BALLADE

MADE IN THE HOT WEATHER

Fountains that frisk and sprinkle
The moss they overspill;
Pools that the breezes crinkle;
The wheel beside the mill,
With its wet, weedy frill;

Wind-shadows in the wheat;
A water-cart in the street;
The fringe of foam that girds
An islet's ferneries;
A green sky's minor thirds—
To live, I think of these!

Of ice and glass the tinkle,
Pellucid, silver-shrill;
Peaches without a wrinkle;
Cherries and snow at will,
From china bowls that fill
The senses with a sweet
Incuriousness of heat;
A melon's dripping sherds;
Cream-clotted strawberries;
Dusk dairies set with curds—
To live, I think of these!

Vale-lily and periwinkle;
Wet stone-crop on the sill;
The look of leaves a-twinkle
With windlets clear and still;
The feel of a forest rill
That wimples fresh and fleet
About one's naked feet;
The muzzles of drinking herds;
Lush flags and bulrushes;
The chirp of rain-bound birds—
To live, I think of these!

Envoy

Dark aisles, new packs of cards,
Mermaidens' tails, cool swards,
Dawn dews and starlit seas,
White marbles, whiter words—
To live, I think of these!

WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING

We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon.
November glooms are barren beside the dusk of June.
The summer flowers are faded, the summer thoughts are sere.
We'll go no more a-roving, lest worse befall, my dear.

We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon.
The song we sang rings hollow, and heavy runs the tune.
Glad ways and words remembered would shame the wretched year.
We'll go no more a-roving, nor dream we did, my dear.

We'll go no more a-roving by the light of the moon.
If yet we walk together, we need not shun the noon.
No sweet thing left to savor, no sad thing left to fear,
We'll go no more a-roving, but weep at home, my dear.

MADAM LIFE

Madam Life's a piece in bloom
  Death goes dogging everywhere:
She's the tenant of the room,
  He's the ruffian on the stair.

You shall see her as a friend,
  You shall bilk him once and twice;
But he'll trap you in the end,
  And he'll stick you for her price.

With his kneebones at your chest,
  And his knuckles in your throat,
You would reason—plead—protest!
  Clutching at her petticoat;

But she's heard it all before,
  Well she knows you've had your fun,
Gingerly she gains the door,
  And your little job is done.

OUT OF TUNE

The spring, my dear,
Is no longer spring.
Does the blackbird sing
What he sang last year?
Are the skies the old
Immemorial blue?
Or am I, or are you,
Grown cold?

Though life be change,
It is hard to bear
When the old sweet air
Sounds forced and strange.
To be out of tune,
Plain You and I . . .
It were better to die,
And soon!

FALMOUTH[1]

O, Falmouth is a fine town with ships in the bay,
And I wish from my heart it's there I was today;
I wish from my heart I was far away from here,
Sitting in my parlor and talking to my dear.
For it's home, dearie, home—it's home I want to be.
Our topsails are hoisted, and we'll away to sea.
O, the oak and the ash and the bonnie birken tree
They're all growing green in the old countrie.

In Baltimore a-walking a lady I did meet
With her babe on her arm, as she came down the street;
And I thought how I sailed, and the cradle standing ready
For the pretty little babe that has never seen its daddie.
And it's home, dearie, home . . .

O, if it be a lass, she shall wear a golden ring;
And if it be a lad, he shall fight for his king:
With his dirk and his hat and his little jacket blue
He shall walk the quarter-deck as his daddie used to do.
And it's home, dearie, home . . .

[1] The burden and the third stanza are adapted from an old song.

O, there's a wind a-blowing, a-blowing from the west,
And that of all the winds is the one I like the best,
For it blows at our backs, and it shakes our pennon free,
And it soon will blow us home to the old countrie.
For it's home, dearie, home—it's home I want to be.
Our topsails are hoisted, and we'll away to sea.
O, the oak and the ash and the bonnie birken tree
They're all growing green in the old countrie.

ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there that I would not do,
England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the world on your bugles blown!

Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice again
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown?

Ever the faith endures,
England, my England:—
'Take and break us: we are yours,
'England, my own!
'Life is good, and joy runs high
'Between English earth and sky:
'Death is death; but we shall die
'To the Song on your bugles blown,
'England—
'To the stars on your bugles blown!'

They call you proud and hard,
  England, my England:
You with worlds to watch and ward,
  England, my own!
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies
You could know nor dread nor ease
  Were the Song on your bugles blown,
    England,
  Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of Ships whose might,
  England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
  England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient sword,
There's the menace of the Word
  In the Song on your bugles blown,
    England—
  Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

MARGARITAE SORORI

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson was born at Edinburgh in 1850 and attended the university there. From infancy he was afflicted with illness, nearly dying of gastric fever at the age of eight, a sickness which left him constitutionally weak. The rest of his life was a struggle between his work and a search for health in Switzerland, America, and the South Seas. He was at first trained to be a lighthouse engineer, following the profession of his family. However, he studied law instead; was admitted to the bar in 1875; and abandoned law for literature a few years later. After wandering several years about Europe, he recorded his peregrinations in *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey* (1879). Although he had written much before his thirtieth year, it was not until the publication of *Treasure Island* (1883) that he became popular. In 1885 he published, with some misgiving, *A Child's Garden of Verses;* and again won public favor a year later with that weird *tour de force, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*

In 1887, after a prolonged breakdown, he left England never to return. In rapid succession he tried the Adirondacks, New Jersey, California, and, in 1888 sailed, as Sidney Colvin said, "on what was only intended to be an excursion, but turned into a voluntary exile, prolonged until the hour of his death." He lived in Honolulu, Australia, and finally Samoa, where, after a long fight, he succumbed to consumption in 1894.

Though primarily a novelist, Stevenson has left one book of poetry which is equally at home in the nursery and the library: *A Child's Garden of Verses* is second only to Mother Goose's own collection in its simplicity and universal appeal. With the exception of these favorite verses and a posthumous *New Poems* (1918), *Underwoods* (1887) and *Ballads* (1890) comprise his entire poetic output. As a genial essayist, he is usually ranked with Charles Lamb. As a romancer, his fame rests securely on *Kidnapped,* the

unfinished masterpiece, *Weir of Hermiston,* and that eternal classic of youth, *Treasure Island.*

Stevenson's writing is inseparable from his charm and the personal appeal of his life-story. He is persuasive, not profound, a trifle too concerned with his craft, but never dull and finally winning.

SUMMER SUN

Great is the sun, and wide he goes
Through empty heaven without repose;
And in the blue and glowing days
More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull
To keep the shady parlor cool,
Yet he will find a chink or two
To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic, spider-clad,
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;
And through the broken edge of tiles
Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around
He bares to all the garden ground,
And sheds a warm and glittering look
Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue,
Round the bright air with footing true,
To please the child, to paint the rose,
The gardener of the World, he goes.

WINTER TIME

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies.
At morning in the dark I rise;
And, shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or, with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if still too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!

ROMANCE

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me,
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near.
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
  Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
  And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
  Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
  And the hunter home from the hill.

GO, LITTLE BOOK

Go, little book, and wish to all
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,
A house with lawns enclosing it,
A living river by the door,
A nightingale in the sycamore.

ALICE MEYNELL

Alice (Christiana Thompson) Meynell was born in 1850, educated at home and spent a great part of her early life in Italy. Later, she married Wilfred Meynell, friend, editor and literary executor of Francis Thompson. For eighteen years she contributed to the *Weekly Register* of which her husband was editor; for twelve years was co-editor with him on *Merrie England;* wrote countless essays, columns for other periodicals, issued several volumes of poetry, made innumerable contacts—not the least of

which was the sponsorship of Francis Thompson which saved him from ruin—all with a huge family growing up about her. There were seven Meynell children, among them being Francis, typographer and poet (see page 656), Viola, the novelist (see page 637), Monica, the critical, and Everard, author of *The Life of Francis Thompson.* As described in the authorized Memoir *Alice Meynell* (1929) by her daughter, Viola, the children, aping their elders, conceived editing as a species of indoor sport and made up papers of their own. In one of these, the youngsters, attempting to answer Mrs. Meynell's critics, unconsciously appraised her:

> "Her thought is a thought which very few writers got. It is mystical but excucite. She is a little obscure to readers who are not up in literature sufficiently to understand mystical touches. . . . Hers is a very docile temperament and thoroughly sympathetic. When she is singing a sympathetic song you can tell that she must have some excellent powers in her head."

The child Monica, touched with the family passion for salvation and trying to save her mother from literature, put the case against "ecstasy" in these delightful sentences:

> "Dear Mother,—I hope you will in time give up your absurd thoughts about litreture. It makes my mind quite feverish when I think of the exhaltation your undergoing. I'm getting quite frightened about calling you 'dear Mother' because you will begin to take it quite seriously. Just because Mr. Henley and those sort of unsencere men say you write well simply because they know if they don't flatter you they'll never get anything for their paper. Now mother take my advise and don't be quite so estatic, you'll get on just as well in the world and much better because you'll be respected. Now just see. MONNIE."

Whatever form Alice Meynell chose, her work was always a reflection of her spirit. She scorned sentimentality, "the facile literary opportunity," despised slovenliness, "the fashion of an animated strut of style," and kept herself aloof from them. Her later years were spent collecting her poems, revising her early prose and publishing the best of it in *Essays.* She died in 1923.

Preludes was published in 1876. Since then, various collections of her poems and essays have appeared at irregular intervals, and, in 1923, Charles Scribner's Sons published *The Poems of Alice Meynell* (Complete Edition). From the earliest restrained verses to the later more ornate conceits, one strain is dominant: the music of religious emotion. It is, obviously, emotion controlled, almost intellectualized. Yet the poetry is never dull. The reader is always

aware of a nature disciplined, but which, for all its self-imposed strictures, is rich in feeling, exquisite in communication.

"Christ in the Universe," "To a Daisy," and "A Thrush Before Dawn," show a literary as well as spiritual kinship with Francis Thompson; but where Thompson is lavish to the point of gaudiness, Mrs. Meynell's fastidiousness dictates a fine economy.

TO A DAISY[1]

Slight as thou art, thou art enough to hide,
  Like all created things, secrets from me,
  And stand a barrier to eternity.
And I, how can I praise thee well and wide
From where I dwell—upon the hither side?
  Thou little veil for so great mystery,
  When shall I penetrate all things and thee,
And then look back? For this I must abide,
Till thou shalt grow and fold and be unfurled
Literally between me and the world.
  Then I shall drink from in beneath a spring,
And from a poet's side shall read his book.
O daisy mine, what will it be to look
  From God's side even on such a simple thing?

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks—the lady of my delight—
  A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
  She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
  And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright
  Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night,
  The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
  A shepherdess of sheep.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 673.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
  Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
  She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
  A shepherdess of sheep.

THE WIND IS BLIND

"Eyeless, in Gaza, at the mill, with slaves."
—*Milton's Samson.*

The wind is blind.
The earth sees sun and moon; the height
Is watch-tower to the dawn; the plain
Shines to the summer; visible light
Is scattered in the drops of rain.

The wind is blind.
The flashing billows are aware;
With open eyes the cities see;
Light leaves the ether, everywhere
Known to the homing bird and bee.

The wind is blind,
Is blind alone. How has he hurled
His ignorant lash, his sinless dart,
His eyeless rush upon the world,
Unseeing, to break his unknown heart!

The wind is blind.
And the sail traps him, and the mill
Captures him; and he cannot save
His swiftness and his desperate will
From those blind uses of the slave.

NOVEMBER BLUE

The golden tint of the electric lights seems to give a complementary color to the air in the early evening.—*Essay on London.*

O heavenly color, London town
  Has blurred it from her skies;
And, hooded in an earthly brown,
  Unheaven'd the city lies.

No longer, standard-like, this hue
Above the broad road flies;
Nor does the narrow street the blue
Wear, slender pennon-wise.

But when the gold and silver lamps
Color the London dew,
And, misted by the winter damps,
The shops shine bright, anew—
Blue comes to earth, it walks the street,
It dyes the wide air through;
A mimic sky about their feet
The throng go crowned with blue.

THE OCTOBER REDBREAST

Autumn is weary, halt, and old;
Ah, but she owns the song of joy!
Her colors fade, her woods are cold.
Her singing-bird's a boy, a boy.

In lovely Spring the birds were bent
On nests, on use, on love, forsooth!
Grown-up were they. This boy's content,
For his is liberty, his is youth.

The musical stripling sings for play
Taking no thought, and virgin-glad.
For duty sang those mates in May.
This singing-bird's a lad, a lad.

A THRUSH BEFORE DAWN

A voice peals in this end of night
A phrase of notes resembling stars,
Single and spiritual notes of light.
What call they at my window-bars?
The South, the past, the day to be,
An ancient infelicity.

Darkling, deliberate, what sings
  This wonderful one, alone, at peace?
What wilder things than song, what things
  Sweeter than youth, clearer than Greece,
    Dearer than Italy, untold
    Delight, and freshness centuries old?

And first first-loves, a multitude,
  The exaltation of their pain;
Ancestral childhood long renewed;
  And midnights of invisible rain;
    And gardens, gardens, night and day,
    Gardens and childhood all the way.

What Middle Ages passionate,
  O passionless voice! What distant bells
Lodged in the hills, what palace state
  Illyrian! For it speaks, it tells,
    Without desire, without dismay
    Some morrow and some yesterday.

All-natural things! But more— Whence came
  This yet remoter mystery?
How do these starry notes proclaim
  A graver still divinity?
    This hope, this sanctity of fear?
    O innocent throat! O human ear!

RENOUNCEMENT

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
  I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
  The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.

O just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
  This breast, the thought of thee waits hidden yet bright;
  But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,

Must doff my will as raiment laid away,
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

CHRIST IN THE UNIVERSE

With this ambiguous earth
His dealings have been told us. These abide:
The signal to a maid, the human birth,
The lesson, and the young Man crucified.

But not a star of all
The innumerable hosts of stars has heard
How He administered this terrestrial ball.
Our race have kept their Lord's entrusted Word.

Of His earth-visiting feet
None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,
The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
Heart-shattering secret of His way with us.

No planet knows of this.
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss,
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.

Nor, in our little day,
May His devices with the heavens be guessed;
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way,
Or His bestowals there, be manifest.

But, in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

O be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

WILLIAM CANTON

William Canton was born in 1852, in the Island of Chusan, off the coast of China. His childhood was spent in Jamaica and his education received in France, at Douai. Besides publishing a dozen volumes of prose sketches and histories, he did journalist's work on the *Glasgow Herald* and later on *The Contemporary Review*. He published two volumes of poetry, *The Lost Epic* (1887) and *The Comrades* (1902). In 1873 Huxley praised his "Through the Ages" as the first attempt to use the material of science for poetry. His verses were out of print for twenty years until 1927 when a small selection was included in one of the Sixpenny Pamphlets of the *Augustan Poets* series.

NATURE'S MAGIC

Give her the wreckage of strife—
  Tumulus, tumbled tower,
Each clod and each stone she'll make her own
  With the grass and innocent flower.

Give her the Candlemas snow,
  Smiling she'll take the gift,
And out of the flake a snowdrop make,
  And a lambkin out of the drift.

F. W. BOURDILLON

Francis William Bourdillon was born in 1852 and educated at Worcester College, Oxford. Although he wrote half a dozen volumes of verse, the only things of his which seem destined to survive are an excellent translation of *Aucassin and Nicolette* (published in 1879) and the tiny love-song without which no anthology of the period is complete. Such volumes of his as *A Lost God* (1891) and *Through the Gateway* (1902) contain writing which is neither better nor worse than the average of its kind.

Bourdillon died in the summer of 1921.

THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

FIONA MACLEOD

(*William Sharp*)

William Sharp was born at Garthland Place, Renfrewshire, Scotland, in 1856. He spent his youth in the Scottish highlands, attended Glasgow University, went to Australia because of poor health, and returned to London in 1879. After no little amount of hack-work, he wrote several volumes of biography and criticism, published a book of plays greatly influenced by Maeterlinck (*Vistas*) and became editor of "The Canterbury Poets" series.

His feminine *alter ego*, Fiona Macleod, was a far different personality. Sharp actually believed himself possessed of another spirit. Under the spell of this second self, he wrote several volumes of Celtic tales, beautiful tragic romances and no little unusual poetry. Of the prose stories written by Fiona Macleod, the most barbaric and vivid are those collected in *The Sin-Eater and Other Tales;* the longer *Pharais, A Romance of the Isles,* is scarcely less fascinating.

In the ten years, 1882-1891, William Sharp published four volumes of rather undistinguished and sometimes "free" verse. In 1896, *From the Hills of Dream* appeared over the signature of Fiona Macleod; *The Hour of Beauty,* a rather more distinctive collection, followed shortly. Both poetry and prose were always the result of two sharply differentiated moods constantly fluctuating; the emotional mood was that of Fiona Macleod, the intellectual and, it must be admitted, the more arresting contribution was that of William Sharp.

He died in 1905.

THE VALLEY OF SILENCE

In the secret Valley of Silence
No breath doth fall;
No wind stirs in the branches;
No bird doth call:
As on a white wall
A breathless lizard is still,
So silence lies on the valley,
Breathlessly still.

In the dusk-grown heart of the valley
An altar rises white:
No rapt priest bends in awe
Before its silent light:
But sometimes a flight
Of breathless words of prayer
White-wing'd enclose the altar,
Eddies of prayer.

THE VISION

In a fair place
Of whin and grass,
I heard feet pass
Where no one was.

I saw a face
Bloom like a flower—
Nay, as the rainbow-shower
Of a tempestuous hour.

It was not man, or woman:
It was not human:
But, beautiful and wild,
Terribly undefiled,
I knew an unborn child.

THE VALLEY OF WHITE POPPIES

Between the gray pastures and the dark wood
A valley of white poppies is lit by the low moon
It is the grave of dreams, a holy rood.

It is quiet there: no wind doth ever fall.
Long, long ago a wind sang once a heart-sweet rune.
Now the white poppies grow, silent and tall.

A white bird floats there like a drifting leaf:
It feeds upon faint sweet hopes and perishing dreams
And the still breath of unremembering grief.

And as a silent leaf the white bird passes,
Winnowing the dusk by dim forgetful streams.
I am alone now among the silent grasses.

MARGARET L. WOODS

Margaret Louisa (Bradley) Woods was born at Rugby in 1856. Her father was the Dean of Westminster and she was educated at home. She married the late Rev. H. G. Woods, President of Trinity College, Oxford, and it is not strange that her work is filled with classic influences, surrounded as she was from her infancy with the flower of academic life.

However, in her dramas she transcended herself and her backgrounds; her numerous novels, though never great, are not without distinction. Her first volume, *Lyrics*, was privately printed in 1888; *Aeromancy* (1896) and *Songs* (1896) are her chief later works. A collected edition of her poems was published in 1914.

TO THE FORGOTTEN DEAD

To the forgotten dead,
Come, let us drink in silence ere we part.
To every fervent yet resolvèd heart
That brought its tameless passion and its tears,
Renunciation and laborious years,
To lay the deep foundations of our race,
To rear its stately fabric overhead
And light its pinnacles with golden grace.
To the unhonored dead.

To the forgotten dead,
Whose dauntless hands were stretched to grasp the rein
Of Fate and hurl into the void again
Her thunder-hoofèd horses, rushing blind
Earthward along the courses of the wind.
Among the stars, along the wind in vain
Their souls were scattered and their blood was shed,
And nothing, nothing of them doth remain.
To the thrice-perished dead.

OSCAR WILDE

Oscar (Fingall O'Flahertie) Wilde was born at Dublin, Ireland, October 16, 1856, and even as an undergraduate at Oxford was marked for a brilliant career. When he was scarcely twenty-one years of age, he won the Newdigate Prize with his poem *Ravenna.*

Devoting himself almost entirely to prose, he speedily became known as a writer of brilliant epigrammatic essays and even more brilliant paradoxical plays, such as *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest.* Wilde's aphorisms and flippancies were quoted everywhere; his fame as a wit was only surpassed by his notoriety as an esthete. (See Preface.)

Most of his poems in prose (such as *The Happy Prince, The Birthday of the Infanta* and *The Fisherman and His Soul*) are more imaginative and richly colored than his rococo verse which suffers from deliberate decadence. But in one long poem, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), he sounded his simplest and most enduring note. Prison was, in some ways, a regeneration for Wilde. It not only produced *The Ballad of Reading Gaol,* but made possible his finest piece of writing, *De Profundis,* only a small part of which has been published. *Salomé,* which has made the author's name a household word, was originally written in French in 1892 and later translated into English by Lord Alfred Douglas, accompanied by the famous illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley. More recently, this heated drama, based on the story of Herod and Herodias, was made into an opera by Richard Strauss.

Wilde's society plays, flashing and cynical, were the forerunners of Bernard Shaw's audacious and far more searching ironies. One sees the origin of a whole school of drama in such epigrams as "The history of woman is the history of the worst form of tyranny the world has ever known: the tyranny of the weak over the strong. It is the only tyranny that lasts." Or "There is only one

thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

Wilde's flair for publicity, avowed in the last quotation, was gratified to the full. No man of his time was more talked about. The end of the Esthetic Movement came coincidentally—and ironically—with the trial of Oscar Wilde and his indictment for a social crime. His predilection for extremes caused his artistic ruin: in youth he was ultra-Keatsian; in early manhood, ultra-Rossettian; in maturity, ultra-Wilde—and he pushed preciosity to the limits of the absurd. He believed in nothing, not even himself, except for the passing effect; he was essentially the "pierrot of the minute"—a pierrot whose shifting passions and impertinences convinced no one. Even his Pierroticism was a pose.

"Impression du Matin" and "Symphony in Yellow" are among the poems which suggest a verbal Whistler (with whom Wilde waged many an epigrammatic battle), and "Hélas" is an unusually honest fragment of self-analysis.

Wilde borrowed from Swinburne no little of his spirit and as much of his technique as he could master. But Swinburne's rebelliousness, though vague and general, was sincere; Wilde, the antithesis of a rebel by instinct, was a social snob who clung to his insurgence for the entrée it won him in properly breathless gatherings. His success was without dignity, his failure without pathos.

Wilde died at Paris, November 30, 1900, his body being buried in the Cemetery of Bagneux. On July 20, 1909, it was transferred to the great Cemetery of Père Lachaise, where a monument was erected to his memory.

The first of many collected editions of his *Poems* (notably the excellent Mosher volume) appeared a few years after his death.

REQUIESCAT

Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.

Peace, peace; she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet;
All my life's buried here.
Heap earth upon it.

IMPRESSION DU MATIN

The Thames nocturne of blue and gold
Changed to a harmony in gray;
A barge with ocher-colored hay
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down
The bridges, till the houses' walls
Seemed changed to shadows, and St. Paul's
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang
Of waking life; the streets were stirred
With country wagons; and a bird
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman all alone,
The daylight kissing her wan hair,
Loitered beneath the gas lamps' flare,
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

HÉLAS

To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,
Is it for this that I have given away
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control?

Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday
With idle songs for pipe and virelay,
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.
Surely there was a time I might have trod
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance—
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?

MAGDALEN WALKS

The little white clouds are racing over the sky,
And the fields are strewn with the gold of the flower of March,
The daffodil breaks under foot, and the tasseled larch
Sways and swings as the thrush goes hurrying by.

A delicate odor is borne on the wings of the morning breeze,
The odor of deep wet grass, and of brown new-furrowed earth,
The birds are singing for joy of the Spring's glad birth,
Hopping from branch to branch on the rocking trees.

And all the woods are alive with the murmur and sound of Spring,
And the rose-bud breaks into pink on the climbing briar,
And the crocus-bed is a quivering moon of fire
Girdled round with the belt of an amethyst ring.

And the plane of the pine-tree is whispering some tale of love
Till it rustles with laughter and tosses its mantle of green,
And the gloom of the wych-elm's hollow is lit with the iris sheen
Of the burnished rainbow throat and the silver breast of a dove.

See! the lark starts up from his bed in the meadow there,
Breaking the gossamer threads and the nets of dew,
And flashing adown the river, a flame of blue!
The kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air.

And the sense of my life is sweet! though I know that the end
is nigh:
For the ruin and rain of winter will shortly come,
The lily will lose its gold, and the chestnut-bloom
In billows of red and white on the grass will lie.

And even the light of the sun will fade at the last,
And the leaves will fall, and the birds will hasten away,
And I will be left in the snow of a flowerless day
To think on the glories of Spring, and the joys of a youth long
past.

Yet be silent, my heart! do not count it a profitless thing
To have seen the splendor of the sun, and of grass, and of
flower!
To have lived and loved! for I hold that to love for an hour
Is better for man and woman than cycles of blossoming Spring.

E TENEBRIS

Come down, O Christ, and help me! reach thy hand,
For I am drowning in a stormier sea
Than Simon on thy lake of Galilee:
The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,
My heart is as some famine-murdered land
Whence all good things have perished utterly,
And well I know my soul in Hell must lie
If I this night before God's throne should stand.
"He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,
Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name
From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height."
Nay, peace, I shall behold, before the night,
The feet of brass, the robe more white than flame,
The wounded hands, the weary human face.

SYMPHONY IN YELLOW

An omnibus across the bridge
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,
And, here and there, a passer-by
Shows like a little restless midge.

Big barges full of yellow hay
Are moved against the shadowy wharf,
And, like a yellow silken scarf,
The thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade
And flutter from the Temple elms,
And at my feet the pale green Thames
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

THE HARLOT'S HOUSE

We caught the tread of dancing feet,
We loitered down the moonlit street,
And stopped beneath the harlot's house.

Inside, above the din and fray,
We heard the loud musicians play
The "Treues Liebes Herz" of Strauss.

Like strange mechanical grotesques,
Making fantastic arabesques,
The shadows raced across the blind.

We watched the ghostly dancers spin
To sound of horn and violin,
Like black leaves wheeling in the wind.

Like wire-pulled automatons,
Slim silhouetted skeletons
Went sidling through the slow quadrille.

They took each other by the hand,
And danced a stately saraband;
Their laughter echoed thin and shrill.

Sometimes a clockwork puppet pressed
A phantom lover to her breast,
Sometimes they seemed to try to sing.

Sometimes a horrible marionette
Came out, and smoked its cigarette
Upon the steps like a live thing.

Then, turning to my love, I said,
"The dead are dancing with the dead,
The dust is whirling with the dust."

But she—she heard the violin,
And left my side and entered in:
Love passed into the house of lust.

Then suddenly the tune went false,
The dancers wearied of the waltz,
The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl.

And down the long and silent street,
The dawn, with silver-sandaled feet,
Crept like a frightened girl.

FROM "THE SPHINX"

How subtle-secret is your smile! Did you love none then? Nay, I know
Great Ammon was your bedfellow! He lay with you beside the Nile!

The river-horses in the slime trumpeted when they saw him come
Odorous with Syrian galbanum and smeared with spikenard and with thyme.

He came along the river bank like some tall galley argent-sailed,
He strode across the waters, mailed in beauty, and the waters sank.

He strode across the desert sand: he reached the valley where you lay:
He waited till the dawn of day: then touched your black breasts with his hand.

You kissed his mouth with mouth of flame: you made the hornèd god your own:
You stood behind him on his throne: you called him by his secret name.

You whispered monstrous oracles into the caverns of his ears:
With blood of goats and blood of steers you taught him monstrous miracles.

White Ammon was your bedfellow! Your chamber was the steaming Nile!
And with your curved archaïc smile you watched his passion come and go.

*

With Syrian oils his brows were bright: and widespread as a tent at noon
His marble limbs made pale the moon and lent the day a larger light.

His long hair was nine cubits' span and colored like that yellow gem
Which hidden in their garment's hem the merchants bring from Kurdistan.

His face was as the must that lies upon a vat of new-made wine:
The seas could not insapphirine the perfect azure of his eyes.

His thick soft throat was white as milk and threaded with the veins of blue:
And curious pearls like frozen dew were broidered on his flowing silk.

FROM "THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL"

He did not wear his scarlet coat,
For blood and wine are red,
And blood and wine were on his hands
When they found him with the dead,
The poor dead woman whom he loved,
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men
In a suit of shabby gray;
A cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay;
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,
Within another ring,
And was wondering if the man had done
A great or little thing,
When a voice behind me whispered low,
"*That fellow's got to swing.*"

Dear Christ! the very prison walls
Suddenly seemed to reel,
And the sky above my head became
Like a casque of scorching steel;
And, though I was a soul in pain,
My pain I could not feel.

I only knew what hunted thought
Quickened his step, and why
He looked upon the garish day
With such a wistful eye;
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

. . . . . .

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold:
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,
Some sell, and others buy;
Some do the deed with many tears,
And some without a sigh:
For each man kills the thing he loves,
Yet each man does not die.

He does not die a death of shame
On a day of dark disgrace,
Nor have a noose about his neck,
Nor a cloth upon his face,
Nor drop feet foremost through the floor
Into an empty space.

He did not wring his hands nor weep,
Nor did he peak or pine,
But he drank the air as though it held
Some healthful anodyne;
With open mouth he drank the sun
As though it had been wine!

And I and all the souls in pain,
Who tramped the other ring,
Forgot if we ourselves had done
A great or little thing,
And watched with gaze of dull amaze
The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass
With a step so light and gay,
And strange it was to see him look
So wistfully at the day,
And strange it was to think that he
Had such a debt to pay.

. . . . . .

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the spring-time shoot:
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder-bitten root,
And, green or dry, a man must die
Before it bears its fruit!

The loftiest place is that seat of grace
For which all worldings try:
But who would stand in hempen band
Upon a scaffold high,
And through a murderer's collar take
His last look at the sky?

It is sweet to dance to violins
When Love and Life are fair:
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes
Is delicate and rare:
But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air!

So with curious eyes and sick surmise
We watched him day by day,
And wondered if each one of us
Would end the self-same way,
For none can tell to what red Hell
His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead man walked no more
Amongst the Trial Men,
And I knew that he was standing up
In the black dock's dreadful pen,
And that never would I see his face
In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm
We had crossed each other's way:
But we made no sign, we said no word,
We had no word to say;
For we did not meet in the holy night,
But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,
Two outcast men we were:
The world had thrust us from its heart,
And God from out His care:
And the iron gin that waits for Sin
Had caught us in its snare.

John Davidson was born at Barrhead, Renfrewshire, in 1857. His *Ballads and Songs* (1895) and *New Ballads* (1897) attained a sudden but too short-lived popularity; his great promise was quenched by an apathetic public and by his own growing disillusion and despair. Neither the later *Holiday and Other Poems* (1906) nor the ambitious trilogy, *God and Mammon* (the first volume of which appeared in 1907) received anything more than frozen respect. His somber poetry never tired of repeating his favorite theme: "Man is but the Universe grown conscious." Author of some four "testaments," six plays, three novels and various collections of poems and essays, Davidson died by his own hand at Penzance in 1909.

The theme of "A Ballad of a Nun" is one which has attracted many writers since the Middle Ages, but Davidson has given it a turn which makes the tale sound far fresher than Vollmoeller's employment of it in *The Miracle.*

Davidson's work may be divided into three stages. His first phase, announced in *The North Wall* (1885), was conscious cleverness. In the second stage he tried to reach sophisticated audiences, attempting the metropolitan note with sketches, plays and novels in the manner of the febrile Nineties. It was not until *Ballads and Songs* and *The Last Ballad* (1899) that he struck what for him and his readers was the true note. "A Ballad of Hell" and "A Ballad of a Nun," among others, are infused with the old ballad spirit; they have the traditional reach and vigor, modernized without becoming topical, pointed but not over-personalized. The first ends, after a gathering climax, on a high and genuinely heroic note.

After 1900 Davidson's work suffered. As his biographer R. M. Wenley puts it, "cosmogonic passion overwhelming him, the artist pales before the prophet in travail." Somberness developed into pessimism, pessimism into self-persecution. He identified himself with James Thomson (see page 76), another maladjusted soul; he became paranoiac, losing himself in "strange passions, outlandish affaires, overstrung rhetoric." Over-emphasizing extremes, his later work was not only neurotic but melodramatic. Hysteria tainted a half-Nietzschean, half-Calvinistic philosophy; his twisted apprehension of the "hero" concept of history (in which he seemed to himself one of the defeated martyrs) was, as Wenley remarks, "like other Neo-Romantics'—from Nietzsche *in excelsis* to D'Annunzio *in inferis.*"

But it is only in his last phase that Davidson turned from singing to shrieking. His huge and misshapen trilogies are forgotten;

his exaggerated colors have faded; the ballads and a few of the lyrics remain. They have persistent if not permanent stuff.

A BALLAD OF HELL

"A letter from my love today!
  Oh, unexpected, dear appeal!"
She struck a happy tear away,
  And broke the crimson seal.

"My love, there is no help on earth,
  No help in heaven; the dead-man's bell
Must toll our wedding; our first hearth
  Must be the well-paved floor of hell."

The color died from out her face,
  Her eyes like ghostly candles shone;
She cast dread looks about the place,
  Then clenched her teeth and read right on.

"I may not pass the prison door;
  Here must I rot from day to day,
Unless I wed whom I abhor,
  My cousin, Blanche of Valencay.

"At midnight with my dagger keen,
  I'll take my life; it must be so.
Meet me in hell tonight, my queen,
  For weal and woe."

She laughed, although her face was wan,
  She girded on her golden belt,
She took her jeweled ivory fan,
  And at her glowing missal knelt.

Then rose, "And am I mad?" she said:
  She broke her fan, her belt untied;
With leather girt herself instead,
  And stuck a dagger at her side.

She waited, shuddering in her room,
  Till sleep had fallen on all the house.
She never flinched; she faced her doom:
  They two must sin to keep their vows.

Then out into the night she went,
And, stooping, crept by hedge and tree;
Her rose-bush flung a snare of scent,
And caught a happy memory.

She fell, and lay a minute's space;
She tore the sward in her distress;
The dewy grass refreshed her face;
She rose and ran with lifted dress.

She started like a morn-caught ghost
Once when the moon came out and stood
To watch; the naked road she crossed,
And dived into the murmuring wood.

The branches snatched her streaming cloak;
A live thing shrieked; she made no stay!
She hurried to the trysting-oak—
Right well she knew the way.

Without a pause she bared her breast,
And drove her dagger home and fell,
And lay like one that takes her rest,
And died and wakened up in hell.

She bathed her spirit in the flame,
And near the center took her post;
From all sides to her ears there came
The dreary anguish of the lost.

The devil started at her side,
Comely, and tall, and black as jet.
"I am young Malespina's bride;
Has he come hither yet?"

"My poppet, welcome to your bed."
"Is Malespina here?"
"Not he! Tomorrow he must wed
His cousin Blanche, my dear!"

"You lie, he died with me tonight."
"Not he! it was a plot" . . . "You lie."
"My dear, I never lie outright."
"We died at midnight, he and I."

The devil went. Without a groan
She, gathered up in one fierce prayer,
Took root in hell's midst all alone,
And waited for him there.

She dared to make herself at home
Amidst the wail, the uneasy stir.
The blood-stained flame that filled the dome,
Scentless and silent, shrouded her.

How long she stayed I cannot tell;
But when she felt his perfidy,
She marched across the floor of hell;
And all the damned stood up to see.

The devil stopped her at the brink:
She shook him off; she cried, "Away!"
"My dear, you have gone mad, I think."
"I was betrayed: I will not stay."

Across the weltering deep she ran;
A stranger thing was never seen:
The damned stood silent to a man;
They saw the great gulf set between.

To her it seemed a meadow fair;
And flowers sprang up about her feet.
She entered heaven; she climbed the stair
And knelt down at the mercy-seat.

Seraphs and saints with one great voice
Welcomed that soul that knew not fear.
Amazed to find it could rejoice,
Hell raised a hoarse, half-human cheer.

IMAGINATION

(From "New Year's Eve")

There is a dish to hold the sea,
  A brazier to contain the sun,
A compass for the galaxy,
  A voice to wake the dead and done!

That minister of ministers,
  Imagination, gathers up
The undiscovered Universe,
  Like jewels in a jasper cup.

Its flame can mingle north and south;
  Its accent with the thunder strive;
The ruddy sentence of its mouth
  Can make the ancient dead alive.

The mart of power, the fount of will,
  The form and mold of every star,
The source and bound of good and ill,
  The key of all the things that are,

Imagination, new and strange
  In every age, can turn the year;
Can shift the poles and lightly change
  The mood of men, the world's career.

THE OUTCAST

Soul, be your own
  Pleasance and mart,
A land unknown,
  A state apart.

Scowl and be rude
  Should love entice;
Call gratitude
  The costliest vice.

Deride the ill
  By fortune sent;
Be scornful still
  If foes repent.

When curse and stone
  Are hissed and hurled,
Aloof, alone
  Disdain the world.

Soul, disregard
  The bad, the good;
Be haughty, hard,
  Misunderstood.

Be neutral; spare
  No humblest lie,
And overbear
  Authority.

Laugh wisdom down;
  Abandon fate;
Shame the renown
  Of all the great.

Dethrone the past;
  Deed, vision—naught
Avails at last
  Save your own thought.

Though on all hands
  The powers unsheathe
Their lightning-brands
  And from beneath,

And from above
  One curse be hurled
With scorn, with love
  Affront the world.

HIS HEART WAS WORN AND SORE

His heart was worn and sore;
He was old before his time;
He had wasted half his life.

Night—it was always night,
And never a star above:
But the ring of a manly stroke,
The flash of a gentle look,
The touch of a comrade's hand
Groping for his on the march,
Were more to him than the day.
At the thought of his youth,
At the pulse of love,
At the swoop of death,
He sang aloud in the dark,
And touched the heart of the world.

THE UNKNOWN

To brave and to know the unknown
  Is the high world's motive and mark,
Though the way with snares be strewn.

The earth itself alone
  Wheels through the light and the dark
Onward to meet the unknown.

Each soul, upright or prone,
  While the owl sings or the lark,
Must pass where the bones are strewn.

Power on the loftiest throne
  Can fashion no certain ark
That shall stem and outride the unknown.

Beauty must doff her zone,
  Strength trudge unarmed and stark
Though the way with eyes be strewn.

This only can atone,
The high world's motive and mark,
To brave and to know the unknown
Though the way with fire be strewn.

A BALLAD OF A NUN

From Eastertide to Eastertide
For ten long years her patient knees
Engraved the stones—the fittest bride
Of Christ in all the diocese.

She conquered every earthly lust;
The abbess loved her more and more;
And, as a mark of perfect trust,
Made her the keeper of the door.

High on a hill the convent hung,
Across a duchy looking down,
Where everlasting mountains flung
Their shadows over tower and town.

The jewels of their lofty snows
In constellations flashed at night;
Above their crests the moon arose;
The deep earth shuddered with delight.

Long ere she left her cloudy bed,
Still dreaming in the orient land,
On many a mountain's happy head
Dawn lightly laid her rosy hand.

The adventurous sun took heaven by storm;
Clouds scattered largesses of rain;
The sounding cities, rich and warm,
Smoldered and glittered in the plain.

Sometimes it was a wandering wind,
Sometimes the fragrance of the pine,
Sometimes the thought how others sinned,
That turned her sweet blood into wine.

Sometimes she heard a serenade
  Complaining sweetly far away:
She said, "A young man woos a maid";
  And dreamt of love till break of day.

Then she would ply her knotted scourge
  Until she swooned; but evermore
She had the same red sin to purge,
  Poor, passionate keeper of the door!

For still night's starry scroll unfurled,
  And still the day came like a flood:
It was the greatness of the world
  That made her long to use her blood.

In winter-time when Lent drew nigh,
  And hill and plain were wrapped in snow,
She watched beneath the frosty sky
  The nearest city nightly glow.

Like peals of airy bells outworn
  Faint laughter died above her head
In gusts of broken music borne:
  "They keep the Carnival," she said.

Her hungry heart devoured the town:
  "Heaven save me by a miracle!
Unless God sends an angel down,
  Thither I go though it were Hell."

Fillet and veil in strips she tore;
  Her golden tresses floated wide;
The ring and bracelet that she wore
  As Christ's betrothed, she cast aside.

"Life's dearest meaning I shall probe;
  Lo! I shall taste of love at last!
Away!" She doffed her outer robe,
  And sent it sailing down the blast.

Her body seemed to warm the wind;
With bleeding feet o'er ice she ran:
"I leave the righteous God behind;
I go to worship sinful man."

She reached the sounding city's gate;
No question did the warder ask:
He passed her in: "Welcome, wild mate!"
He thought her some fantastic mask.

Half-naked through the town she went;
Each footstep left a bloody mark;
Crowds followed her with looks intent;
Her bright eyes made the torches dark.

Alone and watching in the street
There stood a grave youth nobly dressed;
To him she knelt and kissed his feet;
Her face her great desire confessed.

Straight to his house the nun he led:
"Strange lady, what would you with me?"
"Your love, your love, sweet lord," she said;
"I bring you my virginity."

He healed her bosom with a kiss;
She gave him all her passion's hoard;
And sobbed and murmured ever, "This
Is life's great meaning, dear, my lord.

"I care not for my broken vows;
Though God should come in thunder soon,
I am sister to the mountains now,
And sister to the sun and moon."

Through all the towns of Belmarie
She made a progress like a queen.
"She is," they said, "whate'er she be,
The strangest woman ever seen.

"From fairyland she must have come,
Or else she is a mermaiden."
Some said she was a ghoul, and some
A heathen goddess born again.

But soon her fire to ashes burned;
Her beauty changed to haggardness;
Her golden hair to silver turned;
The hour came of her last caress.

At midnight from her lonely bed
She rose, and said, "I have had my will."
The old ragged robe she donned, and fled
Back to the convent on the hill.

Half-naked as she went before,
She hurried to the city wall,
Unnoticed in the rush and roar
And splendor of the carnival.

She ran across the icy plain;
Her worn blood curdled in the blast;
Each footstep left a crimson stain;
The white-faced moon looked on aghast.

She said between her chattering jaws,
"Deep peace is mine, I cease to strive;
Oh, comfortable convent laws,
That bury foolish nuns alive!

"A trowel for my passing-bell,
A little bed within the wall,
A coverlet of stones; how well
I there shall keep the Carnival!"

Like tired bells chiming in their sleep,
The wind faint peals of laughter bore;
She stopped her ears and climbed the steep
And thundered at the convent door.

It opened straight: she entered in,
And at the wardress' feet fell prone:
"I come to purge away my sin;
Bury me, close me up in stone."

The wardress raised her tenderly;
She touched her wet and fast-shut eyes:
"Look, sister; sister, look at me;
Look; can you see through my disguise?"

She looked and saw her own sad face,
And trembled, wondering, "Who art thou?"
"God sent me down to fill your place:
I am the Virgin Mary now."

And with the word, God's mother shone:
The wanderer whispered, "Mary, hail!"
The vision helped her to put on
Bracelet and fillet, ring and veil.

"You are sister to the mountains now,
And sister to the day and night;
Sister to God." And on the brow
She kissed her thrice, and left her sight,

While dreaming in her cloudy bed,
Far in the crimson orient land,
On many a mountain's happy head
Dawn lightly laid her rosy hand.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON

A. Mary F. Robinson—or, as she sometimes signed herself, Madame James Darmesteter—was born at Leamington in 1857. She was educated at University College, where she specialized in Greek literature, and at various colleges in Brussels and Italy. In 1888 she married M. James Darmesteter, the famous Orientalist, who later became director of the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

The author of two novels and several volumes of verse, Mme. Robinson-Darmesteter's first volume was *A Handful of Honeysuckle* (1878). This was followed eight years later by *An Italian Garden* (1886) which attracted notable comment and won for the

author an enthusiastic circle of readers. Her most characteristic later volume is *Retrospect* (1893), wherein the poet may be seen at her best in songs not unlike the early lyrics of Sara Teasdale.

RISPETTO

What good is there, ah, me, what good in Love?
Since, even if you love me, we must part;
And since for either, an' you cared enough,
There's but division and a broken heart?

And yet, God knows, to hear you say: My Dear!
I would lie down and stretch me on the bier.
And yet would I, to hear you say: My Own!
With mine own hands drag down the burial stone.

THE PRESENT AGE

We stand upon a bridge between two stars.
And one is half engulfed in the Abyss;
While unarisen still the other is,
Hidden behind the Orient's cloudy bars.

We tread indeed a perilous path by night!
Yet we who walk in darkness unaghast
Prepare the future and redeem the past,
That after us the Morning-star be bright.

SELVA OSCURA

In a wood
Far away,
Thrushes brood,
Ravens prey,
Eagles circle overhead,
Through the boughs a bird drops dead.

Wild and high,
The angry wind
Wanders by
And cannot find
Any limit to the wood
Full of cries and solitude.

William Watson was born at Burley-in-Wharfedale, Yorkshire, August 2, 1858. He achieved his first success through his long poems on Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson—poems that attempted, sometimes successfully, to combine the manners of these masters. *The Hope of the World* (1897) contains some of his most characteristic though often too rhetorical verse.

He was knighted in 1917, and it was understood that he would be appointed poet laureate upon the death of Alfred Austin. But some of his radical and semi-political poems are supposed to have displeased the powers at Court, and the honor went to Robert Bridges. His best work, which is notable for its dignity and molded imagination, may be found in *Selected Poems*, published in 1902 by John Lane Co. His later, less interesting verse was published in *The Man Who Saw* (1917) and *The Superhuman Antagonists* (1919).

A larger, more inclusive *Selected Poems of Sir William Watson*, chosen by the poet himself, was published in 1927. This volume shows, rather pathetically, the rise and decline of a poet miscast in the rôle of prophet. The vatic note seems to have dwindled to irritation, an irritation caused mainly by a younger order of writers. Too much of Watson's time has been devoted to extolling the tradition he worships and attacking a kind of poetry he dislikes and which, one suspects, he does not understand. His exasperations aside, Watson is capable of producing effects both large and fine. "Ode in May" is a flawless expression of its kind; the song, "April, April" is deservedly famous; the "Epigrams" have certainty and wit. It is in the longer poems that Watson is paradoxically most and least himself. Summoning the wraiths of Wordsworth, Milton, Tennyson, he achieves the state of the devotee who merges his own identity in that which he worships. But Watson, alas, is not in essence an illumined disciple, only a bemused priest repeating an old ritual. Since his idol is not a single or defined figure, he loses his own identity without reflecting a better one, becoming almost a composite parody of the Royal Purple trend in English letters. The shorter poems escape this stricture.

ODE IN MAY

Let me go forth, and share
The overflowing Sun
With one wise friend, or one
Better than wise, being fair,

Where the pewit wheels and dips
On heights of bracken and ling,
And Earth, unto her leaflet tips,
Tingles with the Spring.

What is so sweet and dear
As a prosperous morn in May,
The confident prime of the day,
And the dauntless youth of the year,
When nothing that asks for bliss,
Asking aright, is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is,
And half of the world a bride?

The Song of Mingling flows,
Grave, ceremonial, pure,
As once, from lips that endure,
The cosmic descant rose,
When the temporal lord of life,
Going his golden way,
Had taken a wondrous maid to wife
That long had said him nay.

For of old the Sun, our sire,
Came wooing the mother of men,
Earth, that was virginal then,
Vestal fire to his fire.
Silent her bosom and coy,
But the strong god sued and pressed;
And born of their starry nuptial joy
Are all that drink of her breast.

And the triumph of him that begot,
And the travail of her that bore,
Behold, they are evermore
As warp and weft in our lot.
We are children of splendor and flame,
Of shuddering, also, and tears.
Magnificent out of the dust we came,
And abject from the Spheres.

O bright irresistible lord,
We are fruit of Earth's womb, each one,
And fruit of thy loins, O Sun,
Whence first was the seed outpoured.
To thee as our Father we bow,
Forbidden thy Father to see,
Who is older and greater than thou, as thou
Art greater and older than we.

Thou art but as a word of his speech,
Thou art but as a wave of his hand;
Thou art brief as a glitter of sand
'Twixt tide and tide on his beach;
Thou art less than a spark of his fire,
Or a moment's mood of his soul:
Thou art lost in the notes on the lips of his choir
That chant the chant of the Whole.

ESTRANGEMENT

So, without overt breach, we fall apart,
Tacitly sunder—neither you nor I
Conscious of one intelligible Why,
And both, from severance, winning equal smart.
So, with resigned and acquiescent heart,
Whene'er your name on some chance lip may lie,
I seem to see an alien shade pass by,
A spirit wherein I have no lot or part.

Thus may a captive, in some fortress grim,
From casual speech betwixt his warders, learn
That June on her triumphal progress goes
Through arched and bannered woodlands; while for him
She is a legend emptied of concern,
And idle is the rumor of the rose.

SONG

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,

Weep thy girlish tears,
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fear.
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

WORLD-STRANGENESS

Strange the world about me lies,
  Never yet familiar grown—
Still disturbs me with surprise,
  Haunts me like a face half-known.

In this house with starry dome,
  Floored with gemlike plains and seas,
Shall I never feel at home,
  Never wholly be at ease?

On from room to room I stray,
  Yet my Host can ne'er espy,
And I know not to this day
  Whether guest or captive I.

So, between the starry dome
  And the floor of plains and seas,
I have never felt at home,
  Never wholly been at ease.

FOUR EPIGRAMS

The statue—Buonarroti said—doth wait,
Thralled in the block for me to liberate.
The poem—saith the poet—wanders free
Till I betray it to captivity.

*

The Poet gathers fruit from every tree,
Yea, grapes from thorns and figs from thistles he.

Pluck'd by his hand, the basest weed that grows
Towers to a lily, reddens to a rose.

*

Love, like a bird, hath perch'd upon a spray
For thee and me to hearken what he sings.
Contented, he forgets to fly away;
But hush! . . . remind not Eros of his wings.

*

The children romp within the graveyard's pale;
The lark sings o'er a madhouse or a jail;
Such nice antitheses of perfect poise
Chance in her curious rhetoric employs.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

Francis Thompson was born at Ashton in Lancashire in 1859. The son of a doctor, he was intended for the profession and took the medical course at Owens College, Manchester. He had, however, no interest in medicine, but from youth evinced a passion for religion, particularly for the highly colored ritual of Catholicism.

His attempts to earn a living were a succession of failures. He was employed as a book-agent and sold no books; he was apprenticed to the boot trade and spent many hours of his apprenticeship in public libraries; he enlisted as a soldier and was discharged as incompetent. He went to London, as Francis Meynell says, "not so much to seek his fortune as to escape his bad fortune. He lost in the gamble, but literature gained. He lived for four years as errand man, seller of matches, holder of horses' heads. Soon he became too shabby to gain admittance into the public libraries, so that when one says that desire of reading was with him a passion, one restores to its literal meaning that abused word. He slept on the Embankment, and 'saw the traffic of Jacob's ladder Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.' A woman of the streets took pity on him and kept him alive by her charity—the spirit and the deed. He began to write—now for the first time. His poem, 'Dream Tryst,' written on blue sugar wrapping, found after many months an editorial welcome. Thereafter he was persuaded, though with difficulty, to come off the streets; and even to give up for many years the laudanum he had been taking. For the remaining nineteen years of his life he had an existence at any rate three-quarters

protected from the physical tragedies of his starved and homeless young manhood."

Francis Meynell does not name the persons who gave Thompson "an editorial welcome" and who provided him with the shelter which made it possible for him to continue writing and, for that matter, living. These persons were Wilfred Meynell (later to become Thompson's editor and executor) and the poet Alice Meynell (see page 192), who named their son Francis after the genius who became his godfather.

Thompson's first volume, *Poems*, appeared in 1893, disclosing beneath a surface of wild metaphors and violent neologisms an affinity with the august. This volume was followed by *Sisters Songs* (1895) and *New Poems* (1897). In these, as well as in the essays on De Quincey and Shelley, there was tropical strangeness. Plenitude is here not only in the large concept but in the small detail. Here are metaphors as bold as

> . . . laden with its lampèd clusters bright
> The fiery-fruited vineyard of this night.

and

> I broke through the doors of sunset,
> Ran before the hooves of sunrise.

The "Anthem of Earth," from which the last quotation is taken, is second only to Thompson's highest achievement. "The Hound of Heaven," which Coventry Patmore declared "one of the very few 'great' odes the language can boast," has captured more readers than any religious poem of this century. In a mystic circle, in which the God-pursuing is the God-pursued, the poem moves with the unhurried majesty of a Bach Chorale, building verse upon fugual verse into an unterrestrial architecture. Recognition of a divine order is celebrated with an almost divine excess. Everything, like Thompson's bright laburnum, spills its "honey of wild flame."

Thompson's poetry was embedded in his philosophy to an unusual degree; he saw all things related and linked by immortal power. It was a super-Berkeley who wrote:

> . . . thou canst not stir a flower
> Without troubling of a star.

Thompson's philosophy, however, exalted though it was, could not maintain him on the heights. Rapture and despair fought within him. "Down the arcane where Night would perish in night," he wandered, lost in "incredible excess"; the heart's cry in "The Dread of Height" sounds the ecstatic reaches and profound depths

which his spirit touched. His suspensions were unresolved. But if neither man nor nature granted him final solution, the Church offered him serenity, and no singer has ever put the Catholic creed to more inspired measures.

Influenced at first by the dazzling Crashaw and the conceits of the seventeenth century metaphysicians, Thompson allowed himself the fullest play of purple-pompous tropes. He was as prodigal with strange colors and curious words as a child; the words he applied to characterize Shelley might be used with even greater justice to describe Thompson himself: "To the last, in a degree uncommon even among poets, he retained the idiosyncrasy of childhood, expanded and matured without differentiation. To the last, he was the enchanted child."

Riotous images and extravagant archaisms were Thompson's delight and his defect; he toyed with a style that loved to toss the stars and swing constellations by the hair. His was, not infrequently, a baroque magnificence. He often confused glitter with gold, painting the sublime in terms of the theatrical, falling from the grand manner into the grand-opera manner. At his worst, Thompson overdressed his lines with a showy vocabulary; at his best, he attained true sublimity. Such poems as "A Fallen Yew," "Ode to the Setting Sun," "Any Saint," "In No Strange Land," and, first and last, "The Hound of Heaven," provide a noble shrine for a noble vision. Here he captured, if only for glowing moments, the Grail, a glory of which most of his nimbler contemporaries were not even aware.

Thompson died, after a fragile and spasmodic life, in St. John's Wood, London, in November, 1907. Since that time, several *Selected Poems* have revealed Thompson's pomp and prodigality to a new generation; an inexpensive *Complete Poetical Works* may be found in The Modern Library.

DAISY

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
  Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
  O breath of the distant surf!—

The hills look over on the South,
  And southward dreams the sea;
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand
  Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
  Red for the gatherer springs;
Two children did we stray and talk
  Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
  Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape whose veins
  Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
  Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
  Thronged in whose throat all day.

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
  On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
  Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face.
  She gave me tokens three:—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
  And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
  A still word,—strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
  Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air
  And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand
  And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
  Their scent survives their close:
But the rose's scent is bitterness
  To him that loved the rose.

She looked a little wistfully,
  Then went her sunshine way:—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
  And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
  She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
  And partings yet to be.

She left me marveling why my soul
  Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
  The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
  Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
  And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
  That is not paid with moan,
For we are born in other's pain,
  And perish in our own.

TO A SNOWFLAKE

What heart could have thought you?—
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor?—

"God was my shaper.
Passing surmisal,
He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,

To lust of his mind:—
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

AN ARAB LOVE-SONG

The hunchèd camels of the night [1]
Trouble the bright
And silver waters of the moon.
The Maiden of the Morn will soon
Through Heaven stray and sing,
Star gathering.

Now while the dark about our loves is strewn,
Light of my dark, blood of my heart, O come!
And night will catch her breath up, and be dumb.

Leave thy father, leave thy mother
And thy brother;
Leave the black tents of thy tribe apart!
Am I not thy father and thy brother,
And thy mother?
And thou—what needest with thy tribe's black tents
Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?

ALL'S VAST

O nothing, in this corporal earth of man,
That to the imminent heaven of his high soul
Responds with color and with shadow, can
Lack correlated greatness. If the scroll
Where thoughts lie fast in spell of hieroglyph
Be mighty through its mighty inhabitants;
If God be in His Name; grave potence if
The sounds unbind of hieratic chants;

[1] Cloud-shapes observed by travelers in the East.

All's vast that vastness means. Nay, I affirm
Nature is whole in her least things exprest,
Nor know we with what scope God builds the worm.
Our towns are copied fragments from our breast;
And all man's Babylons strive but to impart
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

EPILOGUE

(*From "A Judgment in Heaven"*)

Heaven, which man's generations draws,
Nor deviates into replicas,
Must of as deep diversity
In judgment as creation be.
There is no expeditious road
To pack and label men for God,
And save them by the barrel-load.
Some may perchance, with strange surprise,
Have blundered into Paradise.
In vasty dusk of life abroad,
They fondly thought to err from God,
Nor knew the circle that they trod;
And, wandering all the night about,
Found them at morn where they set out.
Death dawned; Heaven lay in prospect wide:—
Lo! they were standing by His side!

THE POPPY

(*To Monica*)

Summer set lip to earth's bosom bare,
And left the flushed print in a poppy there:
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

With burnt mouth, red like a lion's, it drank
The blood of the sun as he slaughtered sank,
And dipped its cup in the purpurate shine
When the Eastern conduits ran with wine.

Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,
And hot as a swinked gypsy is,
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.

A child and man paced side by side,
Treading the skirts of eventide;
But between the clasp of his hand and hers
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.

She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,
And saw the sleeping gypsy there:
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,
With—"Keep it, long as you live!"—to him.

And his smile, as nymphs from their laving meres,
Trembled up from a bath of tears;
And joy, like a mew sea-rocked apart,
Tossed on the waves of his troubled heart.

For *he* saw what she did not see,
That—as kindled by its own fervency—
The verge shriveled inward smolderingly:
And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty withered years—
No flower, but twenty shriveled years.

"Was never such thing until this hour,"
Low to his heart he said; "the flower
Of sleep brings wakening to me,
And of oblivion, memory.

"Was never this thing to me," he said,
"Though with bruisèd poppies my feet are red!"
And again to his own heart very low:
"Oh child! I love, for I love and know;

"But you, who love nor know at all
The diverse chambers in Love's guest-hall,
Where some rise early, few sit long:
In how differing accents hear the throng
His great Pentecostal tongue;

"Who know not love from amity,
Nor my reported self from me;
A fair fit gift is this, meseems,
You give—this withering flower of dreams.

"O frankly fickle, and fickly true,
Do you know what the days will do to you?
To your love and you what the days will do,
O frankly fickle, and fickly true?

"You have loved me, Fair, three lives—or days:
'Twill pass with the passing of my face.
But where *I* go, your face goes too,
To watch lest I play false to you.

"I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
Knowing well when certain years are over
You vanish from me to another;
Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

"So, frankly fickle, and fickly true!
For my brief life-while I take from you
This token, fair and fit, meseems,
For me—this withering flower of dreams."

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
Time shall reap, but after the reaper
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper.

Love, love! your flower of withered dream
In leavèd rhyme lies safe, I deem,
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love! *I* fall into the claws of Time:
But lasts within a leavèd rhyme
All that the world of me esteems—
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

THE SUN

(*From "Ode to the Setting Sun"*)

Who lit the furnace of the mammoth's heart?
Who shagged him like Pilatus' ribbèd flanks?
Who raised the columned ranks
Of that old pre-diluvian forestry,
Which like a continent torn oppressed the sea,
When the ancient heavens did in rains depart,
While the high-dancèd whirls
Of the tossed scud made hiss thy drenchèd curls?
Thou rear'dst the enormous brood;
Who hast with life imbued
The lion maned in tawny majesty,
The tiger velvet-barred,
The stealthy-stepping pard,
And the lithe panther's flexous symmetry?

How came the entombèd tree a light-bearer,
Though sunk in lightless lair?
Friend of the forgers of earth,
Mate of the earthquake and thunders volcanic,
Clasped in the arms of the forces Titanic
Which rock like a cradle the girth
Of the ether-hung world;
Swart son of the swarthy mine,
When flame on the breath of his nostrils feeds
How is his countenance half-divine,
Like thee in thy sanguine weeds?
Thou gavest him his light,
Though sepultured in night
Beneath the dead bones of a perished world;
Over his prostrate form
Though cold, and heat, and storm,
The mountainous wrack of a creation hurled.

Who made the splendid rose
Saturate with purple glows;
Cupped to the marge with beauty; a perfume-press
Whence the wind vintages
Gushes of warmèd fragrance richer far
Than all the flavorous ooze of Cyprus' vats?
Lo, in yon gale which waves her green cymar,
With dusky cheeks burnt red
She sways her heavy head,
Drunk with the must of her own odorousness;
While in a moted trouble the vexed gnats
Maze, and vibrate, and tease the noontide hush.
Who girt dissolvèd lightnings in the grape?
Summered the opal with an Irised flush?
Is it not thou that dost the tulip drape,
And huest the daffodilly,
Yet who hast snowed the lily,
And her frail sister, whom the waters name,
Dost vestal-vesture 'mid the blaze of June,
Cold as the new-sprung girlhood of the moon
Ere Autumn's kiss sultry her cheek with flame?
Thou sway'st thy sceptered beam
O'er all delight and dream,
Beauty is beautiful but in thy glance:
And like a jocund maid
In garland-flowers arrayed,
Before thy ark Earth keeps her sacred dance.

A FALLEN YEW

It seemed corrival of the world's great prime,
Made to un-edge the scythe of Time,
And last with stateliest rhyme.

No tender Dryad ever did indue
That rigid chiton of rough yew,
To fret her white flesh through:

But some god like to those grim Asgard lords,
Who walk the fables of the hordes
From Scandinavian fiords.

Upheaved its stubborn girth, and raised unriven,
Against the whirl-blast and the levin,
Defiant arms to Heaven.

When doom puffed out the stars, we might have said,
It would decline its heavy head,
And see the world to bed.

For this firm yew did from the vassal leas,
And rain and air, its tributaries,
Its revenues increase,

And levy impost on the golden sun,
Take the blind years as they might run,
And no fate seek or shun.

But now our yew is strook, is fallen—yea,
Hacked like dull wood of every day
To this and that, men say.

Never!—To Hades' shadowy shipyards gone,
Dim barge of Dis, down Acheron
It drops, or Lethe wan.

Stirred by its fall—poor destined bark of Dis!—
Along my soul a bruit there is
Of echoing images,

Reverberations of mortality:
Spelt backward from its death, to me
Its life reads saddenedly.

Its breast was hollowed as the tooth of eld;
And boys, there creeping unbeheld,
A laughing moment dwelled.

Yet they, within its very heart so crept,
Reached not the heart that courage kept
With winds and years beswept.

And in its boughs did close and kindly nest
The birds, as they within its breast,
By all its leaves caressed.

But bird nor child might touch by any art
Each other's or the tree's hid heart,
A whole God's breadth apart;

The breadth of God, the breadth of death and life!
Even so, even so, in undreamed strife
With pulseless Law, the wife,—

The sweetest wife on sweetest marriage-day,—
Their souls at grapple in mid-way,
Sweet to her sweet may say:

"I take you to my inmost heart, my true!"
Ah, fool! but there is one heart you
Shall never take him to!

The hold that falls not when the town is got,
The heart's heart, whose immurèd plot
Hath keys yourself keep not!

Its ports you cannot burst—you are withstood—
For him that to your listening blood
Sends precepts as he would.

Its gates are deaf to Love, high summoner;
Yea, love's great warrant runs not there:
You are your prisoner.

Yourself are with yourself the sole consortress
In that unleaguerable fortress;
It knows you not for portress.

Its keys are at the cincture hung of God;
Its gates are trepidant to His nod;
By Him its floors are trod.

And if His feet shall rock those floors in wrath,
Or blest aspersion sleek His path,
Is only choice it hath.

Yea, in that ultimate heart's occult abode
To lie as in an oubliette of God,
Or in a bower untrod,

Built by a secret Lover for His Spouse;—
Sole choice is this your life allows,
Sad tree, whose perishing boughs
So few birds house!

A COUNSEL OF MODERATION

On him the unpetitioned heavens descend,
Who heaven on earth proposes not for end;
The perilous and celestial excess
Taking with peace, lacking with thankfulness.
Bliss in extreme befits thee not until
Thou'rt not extreme in bliss; be equal still:
Sweets to be granted think thyself unmeet
Till thou have learned to hold sweet not too sweet.

This thing not far is he from wise in art
Who teacheth; nor who doth, from wise in heart.

ANY SAINT

(*Condensed*)

His shoulder did I hold
Too high that I, o'erbold
Weak one,
Should lean thereon.

But He a little hath
Declined His stately path
And my
Feet set more high;

That the slack arm may reach
His shoulder, and faint speech
Stir
His unwithering hair.

And bolder now and bolder
I lean upon that shoulder,
So dear
He is and near:

And with His aureole
The tresses of my soul
Are blent
In wished content.

Yea, this too gentle Lover
Hath flattering words to move her
To pride
By His sweet side.

Ah, Love! somewhat let be—
Lest my humility
Grow weak
When Thou dost speak.

Rebate Thy tender suit,
Lest to herself impute
Some worth
Thy bride of earth!

A maid too easily
Conceits herself to be
Those things
Her lover sings;

And being straitly wooed,
Believes herself the Good
And Fair
He seeks in her.

Turn something of Thy look,
And fear me with rebuke,
That I
May timorously

Take tremors in Thy arms,
And with contrivèd charms
Allure
A love unsure.

Not to me, not to me,
Builded so flawfully,
O God,
Thy humbling laud!

Not to this man, but Man,—
Universe in a span;
Point
Of the spheres conjoint;

In whom eternally
Thou, Light, dost focus Thee!—
Didst pave
The way o' the wave.

. . . . .

Thou meaning, couldst thou see,
Of all which dafteth thee;
So plain,
It mocks thy pain.

Stone of the Law indeed,
Thine own self couldst thou read;
Thy bliss
Within thee is.

Compost of Heaven and mire,
Slow foot and swift desire!
Lo,
To have Yes, choose No;

. . . . .

To feel thyself and be
His dear nonentity—
Caught
Beyond human thought

In the thunder-spout of Him,
Until thy being dim,
And be
Dead deathlessly.

Stoop, stoop; for thou dost fear
The nettle's wrathful spear,
So slight
Art thou of might!

Rise; for Heaven hath no frown
When thou to thee pluck'st down,
Strong clod!
The neck of God.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to:
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,

And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Flashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face or man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,

Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the willful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenseless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplused.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

FROM "GRACE OF THE WAY"

Now of that vision I, bereaven,
  This knowledge keep, that may not dim:
Short arm needs man to reach to Heaven,
  So ready is Heaven to stoop to him.

TO OLIVIA

I fear to love thee, Sweet, because
Love's the ambassador of loss;
White flake of childhood, clinging so
To my soiled raiment, thy shy snow
At tenderest touch will shrink and go.
Love me not, delightful child.
My heart, by many snares beguiled,
Has grown timorous and wild.
It would fear thee not at all,
Wert thou not so harmless-small.
Because thy arrows, not yet dire,
Are still unbarbed with destined fire,
I fear thee more than hadst thou stood
Full-panoplied in womanhood.

"IN NO STRANGE LAND"[1]

O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumor of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

[1] These verses, unpublished during his lifetime, were found among Francis Thompson's papers after his death.

The angels keep their ancient places;
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendored thing.

But, when so sad thou canst not sadder,
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!

A. E. HOUSMAN

A(lfred) E(dward) Housman was born March 26, 1859, and educated at Oxford where he received his M.A. He was a Higher Division Clerk in the British Patent Office for ten years (1882-1892), leaving the office to become a teacher. He was professor of Latin at University College, London, from 1892 to 1911, professor of Latin at Cambridge after 1911, being one of the finest classical scholars of his time.

He is known to the world at large as the author of *A Shropshire Lad;* his entire non-classical output consisting of only two small volumes of poems, published almost thirty years apart. The popularity of the first of these was exceeded only by Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.* The extraordinary success of both Fitzgerald and Housman is the more curious since both voice a philosophy compounded of pessimism and defeat. Though obviously not Oriental, Housman's fatalism is the darker of the two. Fitzgerald escapes from a world of frustration to a world of sensation; Housman does not even make the gesture of escape. Khayyám's remedy is drink; Housman's is suicide. Such concepts, dismal at the core, could never have found favor had they not been expressed in peculiarly glamorous music. Both Fitzgerald and Housman wrote with such compelling grace that, for the moment, they make darkness seem desirable. It is, however, doubtful whether readers pay much heed to the central philosophy, being carried on if not convinced by the brisk and brilliant measures.

A Shropshire Lad is limited in range and idea. Nature is not kind; lovers are untrue; men cheat and girls betray; lads, though lightfoot, drink and die; an occasional drum calls to a conflict

without reason, a struggle without hope. Nevertheless, courage is dominant, declared over and over in such poems as "Reveillé," "When Smoke Stood Up from Ludlow," "The Chestnut Casts His Flambeaux," and Housman's bitter but fearless philosophy attains bravery in his "Epilogue."

Purely as writing, however, *A Shropshire Lad* is incomparable. Owing nothing to any poet of his own generation and showing no influence other than Heine's, Housman's verse is condensed to the uttermost, stripped of every superfluous ornament, pared and precise. Not the least of his triumph is the mingling of pungent humor and poignance in lines of haunting melody. Possibly the outstanding virtue is the seemingly artless but extraordinarily skillful simplicity of tone. This is song sharpened, acid-flavored, yet always song.

A Shropshire Lad was first published in 1896 when Housman was thirty-seven, although several of the lyrics were written when the poet was younger. After a silence of twenty-six years, there appeared his *Last Poems* (1922). The title is significant, Housman saying, "I publish these poems, few though they are, because it is not likely that I shall ever be impelled to write much more. I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which in the early months of 1895 I wrote the greater part of my other book, nor indeed could I well sustain it if it came." Most of the second volume belongs to an earlier period, to dates between 1895 and 1910. Here in *Last Poems* the Shropshire lad lives again to pipe his mournful-merry tunes; here again the roselipt maiden kisses carelessly as ever, and the heart out of the bosom is given in vain. Here Wenlock Edge is still in trouble, young men shoulder the sky and face the hills whose comfort cannot delay "the beautiful and deathstruck year." The pessimism assumes a half-careless, half-heroic note. The rhythms are a trifle slower, the cadences somewhat more hesitant, but Housman's command of his instrument is unfaltering. The two volumes contain at least a dozen flawless songs which already are part of the world's treasure—songs which are often extended epigrams.

Besides the two remarkable sets of lyrics, Housman has edited Juvenal and the works of Manilius, supplying the latter with a preface which is invaluable not only as an introduction to Manilius, but as an interpretation of a Housman not revealed in his poems.

REVEILLÉ

Wake: the silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying:
Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying
"Who'll beyond the hills away?"

Towns and countries woo together,
Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber
Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad: when the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep.

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;

'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty
And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

"WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN"

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

"LOVELIEST OF TREES"

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

THE DEAD LOVER

"Is my team plowing,
That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
When I was man alive?"

Aye, the horses trample,
The harness jingles now;
No change though you lie under
The land you used to plow.

"Is football playing
Along the river shore,
With lads to chase the leather,
Now I stand up no more?"

Aye, the ball is flying,
The lads play heart and soul;
The goal stands up, the keeper
Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,
That I thought hard to leave,
And has she tired of weeping
As she lies down at eve?"

Aye, she lies down lightly,
She lies not down to weep:
Your girl is well contented.
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

"Is my friend hearty,
Now I am thin and pine;
And has he found to sleep in
A better bed than mine?"

Aye, lad, I lie easy,
I lie as lads would choose;
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart.
Never ask me whose.

"WHEN SMOKE STOOD UP FROM LUDLOW"

When smoke stood up from Ludlow,
And mist blew off from Teme,
And blithe afield to plowing
Against the morning beam
I strode beside my team,

The blackbird in the coppice
Looked out to see me stride,
And hearkened as I whistled
The trampling team beside,
And fluted and replied:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
What use to rise and rise?
Rise man a thousand mornings
Yet down at last he lies,
And then the man is wise."

I heard the tune he sang me,
And spied his yellow bill;
I picked a stone and aimed it
And threw it with a will:
And then the bird was still.

Then my soul within me
Took up the blackbird's strain,
And still beside the horses
Along the dewy lane
It sang the song again:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
The sun moves always west;
The road one treads to labor
Will lead one home to rest,
And that will be the best."

"WHEN I WATCH THE LIVING MEET"

When I watch the living meet,
And the moving pageant file
Warm and breathing through the street
Where I lodge a little while,

If the heats of hate and lust
In the house of flesh are strong,
Let me mind the house of dust
Where my sojourn shall be long.

In the nation that is not
Nothing stands that stood before;
There revenges are forgot,
And the hater hates no more;

Lovers lying two and two
Ask not whom they sleep beside,
And the bridegroom all night through
Never turns him to the bride.

THE IMMORTAL PART

When I meet the morning beam,
Or lay me down at night to dream,
I hear my bones within me say,
"Another night, another day.

"When shall this slough of sense be cast,
This dust of thoughts be laid at last,
The man of flesh and soul be slain
And the man of bone remain?

"This tongue that talks, these lungs that shout,
These thews that hustle us about,
This brain that fills the skull with schemes,
And its humming hive of dreams,—

"These today are proud in power
And lord it in their little hour:
The immortal bones obey control
Of dying flesh and dying soul.

" 'Tis long till eve and morn are gone:
Slow the endless night comes on,
And late to fullness grows the birth
That shall last as long as earth.

"Wanderers eastward, wanderers west,
Know you why you cannot rest?
'Tis that every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton.

"Lie down in the bed of dust;
Bear the fruit that bear you must;
Bring the eternal seed to light,
And morn is all the same as night.

"Rest you so from trouble sore,
Fear the heat o' the sun no more,
Nor the snowing winter wild,
Now you labor not with child.

"Empty vessel, garment cast,
We that wore you long shall last.
—Another night, another day."
So my bones within me say.

Therefore they shall do my will
Today while I am master still,
And flesh and soul, now both are strong,
Shall hale the sullen slaves along,

Before this fire of sense decay,
This smoke of thought blow clean away,
And leave with ancient night alone
The steadfast and enduring bone.

"ON WENLOCK EDGE"

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through hold and hangar
When Uricon the city stood:
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare:
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet:
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:
Today the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

"OH, WHEN I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOU"

Oh, when I was in love with you,
Then I was clean and brave,
And miles around the wonder grew
How well did I behave.

And now the fancy passes by,
And nothing will remain,
And miles around they'll say that I
Am quite myself again.

"ALONG THE FIELD AS WE CAME BY"

Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
"Oh, who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love."

And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

"ON THE IDLE HILL OF SUMMER"

On the idle hill of summer,
  Sleepy with the flow of streams,
Far I hear the steady drummer
  Drumming like a noise in dreams.

Far and near and low and louder
  On the roads of earth go by,
Dear to friends and food for powder,
  Soldiers marching, all to die.

East and west on fields forgotten
  Bleach the bones of comrades slain,
Lovely lads and dead and rotten;
  None that go return again.

Far the calling bugles hollo,
  High the screaming fife replies,
Gay the files of scarlet follow:
  Woman bore me, I will rise.

BREDON HILL

In summertime on Bredon
  The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
  In steeples far and near,
  A happy noise to hear.

Here of a Sunday morning
  My love and I would lie,
And see the colored counties,
  And hear the larks so high
  About us in the sky.

The bells would ring to call her
  In valleys miles away:
"Come all to church, good people;
  Good people, come and pray."
  But here my love would stay.

And I would turn and answer
Among the springing thyme,
"Oh, peal upon our wedding,
And we will hear the chime,
And come to church in time."

But when the snows at Christmas
On Bredon top were strown,
My love rose up so early
And stole out unbeknown
And went to church alone.

They tolled the one bell only,
Groom there was none to see,
The mourners followed after,
And so to church went she,
And would not wait for me.

The bells they sound on Bredon,
And still the steeples hum.
"Come all to church, good people,—"
Oh, noisy bells, be dumb;
I hear you, I will come.

LANCER

I 'listed at home for a lancer,
Oh who would not sleep with the brave?
I 'listed at home for a lancer
To ride on a horse to my grave.

And over the seas we were bidden
A country to take and to keep;
And far with the brave I have ridden,
And now with the brave I shall sleep.

For round me the men will be lying
That learned me the way to behave,
And showed me my business of dying:
Oh who would not sleep with the brave?

They ask and there is not an answer;
Says I, I will 'list for a lancer,
Oh who would not sleep with the brave?

And I with the brave shall be sleeping
At ease on my mattress of loam,
When back from their taking and keeping
The squadron is riding at home.

The wind with the plumes will be playing,
The girls will stand watching them wave,
And eyeing my comrades and saying
Oh who would not sleep with the brave?

They ask and there is not an answer;
Says you, I will 'list for a lancer,
Oh who would not sleep with the brave?

"THE CHESTNUT CASTS HIS FLAMBEAUX, AND THE FLOWERS"

The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers
Stream from the hawthorn on the wind away,
The doors clap to, the pane is blind with showers.
Pass me the can, lad; there's an end of May.

There's one spoilt spring to scant our mortal lot,
One season ruined of our little store.
May will be fine next year as like as not:
Oh, aye, but then we shall be twenty-four.

We for a certainty are not the first
Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed
Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.

It is in truth iniquity on high
To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,
And mar the merriment as you and I
Fare on our long fool's errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is; but pass the can.
My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore;
Our only portion is the estate of man:
We want the moon, but we shall get no more.

If here today the cloud of thunder lours
Tomorrow it will hie on far behests;
The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours
Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust
Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

EIGHT O'CLOCK

He stood, and heard the steeple
Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.
One, two, three, four, to market-place and people
It tossed them down.

Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour,
He stood and counted them and cursed his luck;
And then the clock collected in the tower
Its strength, and struck.

EPILOGUE

"Terence, this is stupid stuff;
You eat your victuals fast enough;
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,
To see the rate you drink your beer.
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,
It gives a chap the belly-ache.
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;
It sleeps well, the horned head:
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now
To hear such tunes as killed the cow.
Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme
Your friends to death before their time
Moping melancholy mad:
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad."

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,
There's brisker pipes than poetry.
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,
Or why was Burton built on Trent?
Oh, many a peer of England brews
Livelier liquor than the Muse,
And malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think:
Look into the pewter pot
To see the world as the world's not.
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past:
The mischief is that 'twill not last.
Oh, I have been to Ludlow fair
And left my necktie God knows where,
And carried half way home, or near,
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:
Then the world seemed none so bad,
And I myself a sterling lad;
And down in lovely muck I've lain,
Happy till I woke again.
Then I saw the morning sky:
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;
The world, it was the old world yet,
I was I, my things were wet,
And nothing now remained to do
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still
Much good, but much less good than ill,
And while the sun and moon endure
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
I'd face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good.
'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:
Out of a stem that scored the hand
I wrung it in a weary land.
But take it: if the smack is sour,
The better for the embittered hour;

It should do good to heart and head
When your soul is in my soul's stead;
And I will friend you, if I may,
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:
There, when kings will sit to feast,
They get their fill before they think
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.
He gathered all that springs to birth
From the many-venomed earth;
First a little, thence to more,
He sampled all her killing store;
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
Sate the king when healths went round.
They put arsenic in his meat
And stared aghast to watch him eat;
They poured strychnine in his cup
And shook to see him drink it up:
They shook, they stared as white's their shirt:
Them it was their poison hurt.
—I tell the tale that I heard told.
Mithridates, he died old.

DOUGLAS HYDE

Doctor Douglas Hyde was born in Roscommon County, Ireland, in, as nearly as can be ascertained, 1860. One of the most brilliant Irish scholars of his day, he worked indefatigably for the cause of his native letters. He wrote a comprehensive history of Irish literature; compiled, edited and translated into English the *Love Songs of Connaught;* was President of The Irish National Literary Society; and is the author of innumerable poems in Gaelic—far more than he ever wrote in English. His collections of Irish folk-lore and poetry were among the most notable contributions to the Celtic revival; they were (see Preface), to a large extent, responsible for it. Since 1909 he has been Professor of Modern Irish in University College, Dublin.

The poems here quoted are two of his many sensitive and reanimating translations. In the music and peculiar rhyme-scheme of the first, the paraphraser reproduces the peculiar flavor as well as the color of the West Irish original. His work deserves a wider audience than it has received.

I SHALL NOT DIE FOR THEE

(*From the Irish*)

For thee, I shall not die,
  Woman of high fame and name;
Foolish men thou mayest slay.
  I and they are not the same.

Why should I expire
  For the fire of an eye,
Slender waist or swan-like limb,
  Is't for them that I should die?

The round breasts, the fresh skin,
  Cheeks crimson, hair so long and rich;
Indeed, indeed, I shall not die,
  Please God, not I, for any such.

The golden hair, the forehead thin,
  The chaste mien, the gracious ease,
The rounded heel, the languid tone,—
  Fools alone find death from these.

Thy sharp wit, thy perfect calm,
  Thy thin palm like foam o' the sea;
Thy white neck, thy blue eye,
  I shall not die for thee.

Woman, graceful as the swan,
  A wise man did nurture me.
Little palm, white neck, bright eye,
  I shall not die for ye.

MY GRIEF ON THE SEA

(*From the Irish*)

My grief on the sea,
  How the waves of it roll!
For they heave between me
  And the love of my soul!

Abandon'd, forsaken,
To grief and to care,
Will the sea ever waken
Relief from despair?

My grief and my trouble!
Would he and I were
In the province of Leinster,
Or County of Clare!

Would I and my darling—
O heart-bitter wound!—
On board of the ship
For America bound.

On a green bed of rushes
All last night I lay,
And I flung it abroad
With the heat of the day.

And my Love came behind me,
He came from the South;
His breast to my bosom,
His mouth to my mouth.

AMY LEVY

Amy Levy, a singularly gifted Jewess, was born at Clapham, in 1861. A fiery young poet, she burdened her own difficulties with the brooding sorrows of her race. She wrote one novel, *Reuben Sachs*, and two volumes of poetry—the more distinctive of the two being half pathetically, half ironically entitled *A Minor Poet* (1884). After several years of tragic introspection, she committed suicide in 1889 at the age of twenty-eight. Her "Epitaph" is a bitter snatch of self-revelation. "In the Mile End Road" is typical of the dramatic-lyrical style she was trying to perfect.

EPITAPH

(*On a Commonplace Person Who Died in Bed*)

This is the end of him, here he lies:
The dust in his throat, the worm in his eyes,

The mold in his mouth, the turf on his breast;
This is the end of him, this is best.
He will never lie on his couch awake,
Wide-eyed, tearless, till dim daybreak.
Never again will he smile and smile
When his heart is breaking all the while.
He will never stretch out his hands in vain
Groping and groping—never again.
Never ask for bread, get a stone instead,
Never pretend that the stone is bread;
Nor sway and sway 'twixt the false and true
Weighing and noting the long hours through.
Never ache and ache with the choked-up sighs . . .
This is the end of him, here he lies.

IN THE MILE END ROAD

How like her! But 'tis she herself,
Comes up the crowded street!
How little did I think, this morn,
My only love to meet!

Who else that motion and that mien?
Whose else that airy tread?
For one strange moment I forgot
My only love was dead.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON

Katharine Tynan was born at Dublin in 1861, and educated at the Convent of St. Catherine at Drogheda. She married Henry Hinkson, a lawyer and author, in 1893. Her poetry is largely actuated by religious themes, and much of her verse is devotional yet distinctive. She was one of the members though not one of the leaders of the Irish Renaissance.

Although she has written many novels, miracle plays, memoirs and books of verse, she is at her best in *New Poems* (1911). The lines are graceful and meditative, with occasional notes of deep pathos. Of the more recent volumes, the most interesting are *Flower of Youth* (1914), *Late Songs* (1917) and *Evensong* (1922).

Her autobiographical account of the Irish Renaissance is set forth in *Twenty-Five Years* (1913) and *Memories* (1924). She died, after a brief illness, April 2, 1931.

SHEEP AND LAMBS

All in the April morning,
April airs were abroad;
The sheep with their little lambs
Pass'd me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Pass'd me by on the road;
All in an April evening
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak human cry;
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet:
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

Rest for the Lamb of God
Up on the hill-top green;
Only a cross of shame
Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
And thought on the Lamb of God.

ALL SOULS

The door of Heaven is on the latch
Tonight, and many a one is fain
To go home for one's night's watch
With his love again.

Oh, where the father and mother sit
There's a drift of dead leaves at the door
Like pitter-patter of little feet
That come no more.

Their thoughts are in the night and cold,
  Their tears are heavier than the clay,
But who is this at the threshold
  So young and gay?

They are come from the land o' the young,
  They have forgotten how to weep;
Words of comfort on the tongue,
  And a kiss to keep.

They sit down and they stay awhile,
  Kisses and comfort none shall lack;
At morn they steal forth with a smile
  And a long look back.

SLOW SPRING

O year, grow slowly. Exquisite, holy,
  The days go on
With almonds showing the pink stars blowing,
  And birds in the dawn.

Grow slowly, year, like a child that is dear,
  Or a lamb that is mild,
By little steps, and by little skips,
  Like a lamb or a child.

MARY E. COLERIDGE

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, the great-niece of Samuel T. Coleridge, was born in September, 1861. Her childhood was, she wrote, "vague and twilit, and I can recall scarcely anything except sharp sensations of fear that broke the dull dream of my days." She dwelt in books, reading Shakespeare before she entered her teens. At thirteen, she became acquainted with her father's friend, William Johnson (the William Cory of *Ionica*) and the influence of this poet and scholar remained throughout her life. Her taste in literature was catholic; she was a passionate admirer of Browning, and Tolstoy so affected her that it was only after a great struggle and with the realization of her own physical incapacity, that she abandoned the idea of devoting her life to the poor. As it was, she taught needy girls desiring education, and during the last twelve years of her life taught at The Working Women's College. She died in August 1907.

Her first novel, *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus* (1893), was a wild fantasia ignored by the public though praised by Stevenson. Two years later Robert Bridges saw a manuscript of her verse and urged its publication. It appeared as *Fancy's Following* (1896), over the pseudonym of "Anodos." Tales, essays, novels followed, one of which—*The King with Two Faces* (1897)—was a sudden success. Two posthumous volumes furnish a complete summary of her qualities: *Gathered Leaves from the Prose of Mary E. Coleridge*, with a Memoir by Edith Sichel (1911) and *Collected Poems*, in which the original forty-five have grown to two hundred and twenty-seven.

Her novels were never wholly satisfactory; they were, says Edith Sichel, "the novels of a poet, and this was her weakness and her strength." It is as a poet that she survives. Robert Bridges, in an essay in *The Cornhill Magazine* for November, 1907, compares her to Blake, Heine and Canon Dixon. There is some justification for summoning this queerly combined trio, since Mary Coleridge mingled, in a muted way, the clarity of the first, the *Minnesinger* simplicity of the second and the religious convictions (not mere religiosity) of the third. Hers is throughout a noble if diminishing verse, a quiet verse, not so much disciplined as inherently low-spoken. But poems like "Our Lady" and such brief lyrics as "I Saw a Stable" attest to the spontaneity which made this poet see the heavenly in the humble and the miraculous within the casual.

OUR LADY

Mother of God—no lady thou:
  Common woman of common earth.
"Our Lady" ladies call thee now,
  But Christ was never of gentle birth;
  A common man of common earth.

For God's ways are not our ways.
  The noblest lady in the land
Would have given up half her days,
  Would have cut off her right hand
  To bear the child that was God of the land.

Never a lady did He choose,
  Only a maid of low degree,
So humble she might not refuse
  The carpenter of Galilee:
  A daughter of the people, she.

Out she sang the song of her heart.
  Never a lady so had sung.
She knew no letters, had no art;
  To all mankind, in woman's tongue,
  Hath Israelitish Mary sung.

And still for men to come she sings,
  Nor shall her singing pass away.
"*He hath fillèd the hungry with good things*"—
  Oh, listen, lords and ladies gay—
  "*And the rich He hath sent empty away.*"

I SAW A STABLE

I saw a stable, low and very bare,
  A little child in a manger.
The oxen knew Him, had Him in care,
  To men he was a stranger.
The safety of the world was lying there—
  And the world's danger.

MORTAL COMBAT

It is because you were my friend,
  I fought you as the devil fights.
Whatever fortune God may send,
  For once I set the world to rights.

And that was when I thrust you down,
  And stabbed you twice and twice again,
Because you dared take off your crown
  And be a man like other men.

GONE

About the chambers of my heart
Friends have been coming—going—many a year.
  The doors stand open here.
Some, lightly stepping, enter; some depart.

Freely they come and freely go, at will.
The walls give back their laughter; all day long
They fill the house with song.
One door alone is shut, one chamber still.

OWEN SEAMAN

Owen Seaman was born in 1861, educated at Clare College, became a schoolmaster (1884), professor of literature (1890), and an attorney (1894). In the meanwhile he wrote light verse and occasional parodies, but his début before a larger public was effected with "The Rhyme of the Kipperling," a burlesque of Kipling's "The Rhyme of the Three Sealers." This was published (1894) in *Punch*, the humorous periodical of which Seaman became assistant editor in 1898 and editor in 1906. He was knighted in 1914.

As a writer of light verse and as a parodist, his work has delighted a generation of admirers. Some of his most adroit lines may be found in his *In Cap and Bells* (1899), *The Battle of the Bays* (1896), *A Harvest of Chaff* (1904) and *Salvage* (1908). The serious verse in *War Time* (1915) and the later volumes reveals a much weaker talent, a capacity for rhyme that has little to recommend itself beyond a certain neatness of execution.

TO AN OLD FOGEY

(*Who Contends that Christmas is Played Out*)

O frankly bald and obviously stout!
And so you find that Christmas as a fête
Dispassionately viewed, is getting out
Of date.

The studied festal air is overdone;
The humor of it grows a little thin;
You fail, in fact, to gather where the fun
Comes in.

Visions of very heavy meals arise
That tend to make your organism shiver;
Roast beef that irks, and pies that agonize
The liver;

Those pies at which you annually wince,
  Hearing the tale how happy months will follow
Proportioned to the total mass of mince
  You swallow.

Visions of youth whose reverence is scant,
  Who with the brutal *verve* of boyhood's prime
Insist on being taken to the pant-
  omime.

Of infants, sitting up extremely late,
  Who run you on toboggans down the stair;
Or make you fetch a rug and simulate
  A bear.

This takes your faultless trousers at the knees,
  The other hurts them rather more behind;
And both effect a fracture in your ease
  Of mind.

My good dyspeptic, this will never do;
  Your weary withers must be sadly wrung!
Yet once I well believe that even you
  Were young.

Time was when you devoured, like other boys,
  Plum-pudding sequent on a turkey-hen;
With cracker-mottoes hinting of the joys
  Of men.

Time was when 'mid the maidens you would pull
  The fiery raisin with profound delight;
When sprigs of mistletoe seemed beautiful
  And right.

Old Christmas changes not! Long, long ago
  He won the treasure of eternal youth;
Yours is the dotage—if you want to know
  The truth.

Come, now, I'll cure your case, and ask no fee:—
  Make others' happiness this once your own;
All else may pass: that joy can never be
  Outgrown!

Norman (Rowland) Gale was born in Kew, Surrey, in 1862. He was educated at Oxford and became a teacher by profession. Since 1892 he has devoted all his time to literature, publishing some eight volumes of pleasantly rustic verse. The nature of his poetry may be gathered from the titles of some of his books: *A Country Muse* (1892), *Orchard Songs* (1893), *A Verdant Country* (1894). *Collected Poems* was published in 1914.

The Candid Cuckoo (1918), *Verse in Bloom* (1925), *A Flight of Fancies* (1927) continue the thin strain of pastoral sweetness long drawn out.

THE COUNTRY FAITH

Here in the country's heart
Where the grass is green
Life is the same sweet life
As it ever has been.

Trust in a God still lives,
And the bell at morn
Floats with the thought of God
Over the rising corn.

God comes down in the rain,
And the crop grows tall—
This is the country faith,
And the best of all!

A SONG

First the fine, faint, dreaming motion
Of the tender blood
Circling in the veins of children—
This is Life, the bud.

Next the fresh, advancing beauty
Growing from the gloom,
Waking eyes and fuller blossom—
This is Life, the bloom.

Then the pain that follows after,
Grievous to be borne,
Pricking, steeped in subtle poisons—
This is Love, the thorn.

HENRY NEWBOLT

Henry (John) Newbolt was born at Bilston in 1862 and educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was called to the Bar in 1887 but retired from practice in 1899.

After editing *The Monthly Review* (1900-1904), he gave himself wholly to creative labor. His early work was frankly imitative of Tennyson; he even attempted to add to the Arthurian legends with a drama in blank verse entitled *Mordred* (1895). It was not until he wrote his sea-ballads that he struck his own note. With the publication of *Admirals All* (1897) and *The Island Race* (1898) his fame was widespread. The popularity of his lines was due not so much to the subject-matter of Newbolt's verse as to the breeziness of his music, the solid beat of rhythm, the vigorous swing of his stanzas. *Songs of the Fleet* (1910) repeats a sometimes too "salty" strain, but *The Linnet's Nest* (1927) discloses a quieter—and better—poet.

Besides being a personality of unusual persuasiveness as well as a poet, Newbolt has written many essays; his critical volume, *A New Study of English Poetry* (1917), is a collection of articles that are both analytical and alive. *New Paths on Helicon* (1927) is a balanced, non-partisan anthology of contemporary verse.

DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin'
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe,

"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come.
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin',
They shall find him, ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago.

THE NIGHTJAR

We loved our Nightjar, but she would not stay with us.
We had found her lying as dead, but soft and warm,
Under the apple tree beside the old thatched wall.
Two days we kept her in a basket by the fire,
Fed her, and thought she well might live—till suddenly
In the very moment of most confiding hope
She raised herself all tense, quivered, and drooped, and died.
Tears sprang into my eyes—why not? the heart of man
Soon sets itself to love a living companion
And more so if by chance it asks some care of him.
And this one had the kind of loveliness that goes
Far deeper than the optic nerve—full fathom five
To the soul's ocean cave, where Wonder and Reason
Tell their alternate dreams of how the world was made.
So wonderful she was—her wings the wings of night
But powdered here and there with tiny golden clouds
And wave-line markings like sea-ripples on the sand.
O how I wish I might never forget that bird—
Never!—but even now, like all beauty of earth,
She is fading from me into the dusk of Time.

Eden Phillpotts was born November 4, 1862, at Mount Abu, India, son of an English army officer. He was educated at Plymouth, England, and at seventeen entered the fire insurance business, remaining in it for more than ten years. It was during this time that Phillpotts began his stories, writing steadily at night. Finding literature a dubious profession at first, he tried acting and, though he was not a spectacularly successful player, his stage experience undoubtedly gave him a technique which he employed later in the construction of eminently successful dramas.

Phillpotts is best known for his Devonshire tales—an enthusiastic critic has said that Phillpotts did for Dartmoor what Hardy accomplished for Wessex—but his later work concerned itself more with medieval and classical backgrounds. An extraordinarily fecund author, a check-list as of 1929 shows three dozen publications since *Children of the Mist* in 1898. This list includes ten Devonshire novels, six historical narratives, four collections of short stories, four volumes of studies, two mystery tales, four plays (of which *The Farmer's Wife*, 1916, ran for years) and four books of poetry.

A Dish of Apples (1921), *A Harvesting* (1924) and *Brother Man* (1926) are frequently derivative and undistinguished. But they are not without character. In the midst of much versifying, there is no little of the acrid, earthy flavor which abounds in the best of his stories of the soil.

LITANY TO PAN

By the abortions of the teeming Spring,
By Summer's starved and withered offering,
By Autumn's stricken hope and Winter's sting,
Oh, hear!

By the ichneumon on the writhing worm,
By the swift far-flung poison of the germ,
By soft and foul brought out of hard and firm,
Oh, hear!

By the fierce battle under every blade,
By the etiolation of the shade,
By drought and thirst and things undone half made,
Oh, hear!

By all the horrors of re-quickened dust,
By the eternal waste of baffled lust,
By mildews and by cankers and by rust,
Oh, hear!

By the fierce scythe of Spring upon the wold,
By the dead weaning mother in the fold,
By stillborn, stricken young and tortured old,
Oh, hear!

By fading eyes pecked from a dying head,
By the hot mouthful of a thing not dead,
By all thy bleeding, struggling, shrieking red,
Oh, hear!

By all the agonies of all the past,
By earth's cold dust and ashes at the last,
By her return to the unconscious vast,
Oh, hear!

THE HUNTING

When red sun fox steals down the sky,
And darkness dims the heavens high,
There leap again upon his tracks
The eager, starry, hunting packs.
They glitter, glitter, gold and green,
With sparks of frosty fire between,
And Dian bright as day;
While in the gloaming, far below,
Brown owl doth shout, "Hi! Tally Ho!
Sun fox hath gone away!"

To music of the spheres they sweep
Over the western world asleep;
Then in the east, with sudden rush,
Sun fox shall whisk his white-tipped brush.
The field is fading, gold and green,
With sparks of frosty fire between,
And Dian growing gray;
While morning leaps the hither hill
And herald lark shouts with a will,
"Sun fox hath gone away!"

Oh, Huntress fond and silly stars—
White Venus, fiery, futile Mars,
In vain your pack ye whirl and cast
Upon the marches of the vast;
Vainly ye glitter, gold and green,
With sparks of frosty fire between,
And Dian's arrows fly
In shattered shafts of ebbing light;
For ne'er shall day be caught by night,
And sun fox cannot die.

THE GAFFER'S SONG

A sudden wakin', a sudden weepin';
A li'l suckin', a li'l sleepin';
A cheel's full joys an' a cheel's short sorrows,
Wi' a power o' faith in gert tomorrows.

Young blood red-hot an' the love of a maid;
Wan glorious hour as'll never fade;
Then shadows an' sunshine an' triumphs an' tears
Pile the gatherin' weight o' the flyin' years.

Now auld man's talk o' the days behind me;
My darter's youngest darter to mind me;
A li'l dreamin', a li'l dyin',
A li'l, lew corner o' airth to lie in.

VICTOR PLARR

Victor (Gustave) Plarr was born June 21, 1863, near Strasbourg and came to Scotland at the age of seven, his father's house having been burnt in the Franco-German war of 1870. He was educated at St. Andrew's, studied medicine and, in 1897, became the librarian of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Plarr was one of the less conspicuous members of that literary group which made the Nineties so famous. He was one of the founders of the Rhymers' Club and appeared in both volumes of its selected poems. His own collection, *In the Dorian Mood*, was published in 1896.

Although most of his lines scarcely rise above the level of competent verse-making, the tiny epitaph here reprinted bids fair to

survive Plarr's more ambitious but less successful poetry. Although Plarr seems fated to be known as the author of only "Epitaphium Citharistriae," yet "Ad Cinerarium," far from being a less worthy example of his work, may be said to equal if not surpass the better-known poem.

Plarr died in London, January 28, 1929.

EPITAPHIUM CITHARISTRIAE

Stand not uttering sedately
  Trite oblivious praise above her!
Rather say you saw her lately
  Lightly kissing her last lover.

Whisper not, "There is a reason
  Why we bring her no white blossom":
Since the snowy bloom's in season
  Strow it on her sleeping bosom:

Oh, for it would be a pity
  To o'erpraise her or to flout her:
She was wild, and sweet, and witty—
  Let's not say dull things about her.

AD CINERARIUM

Who in this small urn reposes,
  Celt or Roman, man or woman,
Steel of steel, or rose of roses?

Whose the dust set rustling slightly,
  In its hiding-place abiding,
When this urn is lifted lightly?

Sure some mourner deemed immortal
  What thou holdest and enfoldest,
Little house without a portal!

When the artificers had slowly
  Formed thee, turned thee, sealed thee, burned thee,
Freighted with thy freightage holy,

Sure he thought there's no forgetting
All the sweetness and completeness
Of his rising, of her setting,

And so bade them grave no token,
Generation, age, or nation,
On thy round side still unbroken;—

Let them score no cypress verses,
Funeral glories, prayers, or stories,
Mourners' tears, or mourners' curses,

Round thy brown rim time has polished,—
Left thee dumbly cold and comely
As some shrine of gods abolished.

Ah, 'tis well! It scarcely matters
What is sleeping in the keeping
Of this house of human tatters,

Steel of steel, or rose of roses,
Man or woman, Celt or Roman,
If but soundly he reposes!

A. T. QUILLER-COUCH

Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch ("Q") was born in Bodwin, Cornwall, in 1863. His reputation rests chiefly on his skill as editor (he compiled *The Oxford Book of English Verse* in 1900 and *The Oxford Book of Ballads* a few years later), but Quiller-Couch has a large following in the dual rôle of lecturer and romancer.

Although practically unknown in America as a narrator, Quiller-Couch has established himself in England as one of the first to use the Cornish background later so much in vogue. A prolific author, he has written continuously and in every vein; a check-list in 1929 showed nine volumes of essays, three of poems, two collections of fairy-tales, and eleven novels, exclusive of his anthologies.

The semi-narrative lyrics are the best features of his three volumes of verse: *Green Bays* (1893), *Poems and Ballads* (1896) and *The Vigil of Venus* (1912).

THE WHITE MOTH

If a leaf rustled, she would start:
And yet she died a year ago.
How had so frail a thing the heart
To journey where she trembled so?
And do they turn and turn in fright,
Those little feet, in so much night?

The light above the poet's head
Streamed on the page and on the cloth,
And twice and thrice there buffeted
On the black pane a white-winged moth:
'Twas Annie's soul that beat outside
And "Open, open, open!" cried:

"I could not find the way to God;
There were too many flaming suns
For signposts, and the fearful road
Led over wastes where millions
Of tangled comets hissed and burned—
I was bewildered and I turned.

"O, it was easy then! I knew
Your window and no star beside.
Look up, and take me back to you!"
—He rose and thrust the window wide.
'Twas but because his brain was hot
With rhyming, for he heard her not.

But poets polishing a phrase
Show anger over trivial things;
And as she blundered in the blaze
Towards him, on ecstatic wings,
He raised a hand and smote her dead;
Then wrote "*That I had died instead!*"

ARTHUR SYMONS

Born in 1865 in Wales, of Cornish parents, Arthur Symons was educated at private schools, and was attracted at an early age to

the Symbolist movement, of which he became one of the leaders in England. His first few publications reveal an intellectual rather than an emotional passion. Those volumes—*Days and Nights* (1889), *Silhouettes* (1892), *London Nights* (1895)—are full of the artifice of the period, but Symons' technical skill and frequent analysis often save the poems from complete decadence. His later books are less imitative; the influence of Verlaine and Baudelaire is not so apparent. The scent of patchouli, the breath of heavy, narcotic blossoms still cling to many of the pages, but there is no longer the obsession with strange sensations, with what might be called the Deadly Nightshade school of poetry.

The best of Symons' poems have a firm delicacy of touch; they breathe an intimacy in which sophistication is not cynical and sensuousness is restrained. His various collections of essays and stories reflect the same blend of intellectuality and perfumed romanticism one finds in his poems.

After a silence of some years, Symons began to write in a less nostalgic and more critical vein. *Dramatis Personae* appeared in 1923; a limited edition of his *Collected Works* a year later. *The Symbolist Movement in Literature,* originally published in 1899, remains one of the best studies of the period.

Of his many volumes in prose, *Spiritual Adventures* (1905), while obviously influenced by Walter Pater, is by far the most original, an undeservedly neglected volume of psychological short stories. Most of his poetry up to 1902 was collected in two volumes, *Poems,* published by John Lane Co. *The Fool of the World* appeared in 1907; his dramatic *Tragedies* in 1916.

Appraisals of Symons' work have touched the extremes of adulation and denunciation. A final estimate of his work has not yet been reached. It is obvious that his early poetry, generated from weariness and literary wantonness, belongs to the literature of decadence. His later work is no longer preoccupied with orchids, scented handkerchiefs and the nuances of sensation. His mind, essentially healthy, threw off its infection and produced work of a clean and admirable precision.

"In the Wood of Finvara," "Modern Beauty," "The Crying of Water" and a dozen other lyrics are as simple as they are sensuous.

IN THE WOOD OF FINVARA

I have grown tired of sorrow and human tears;
Life is a dream in the night, a fear among fears,
A naked runner lost in a storm of spears.

I have grown tired of rapture and love's desire;
Love is a flaming heart, and its flames aspire
Till they cloud the soul in the smoke of a windy fire.

I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood;
Here between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude.

Here, in the fairy wood, between sea and sea,
I have heard the song of a fairy bird in a tree,
And the peace that is not in the world has flown to me.

MODERN BEAUTY

I am the torch, she saith, and what to me
If the moth die of me? I am the flame
Of beauty, and I burn that all may see
Beauty, and I have neither joy nor shame,
But live with that clear light of perfect fire
Which is to men the death of their desire.

I am Yseult and Helen. I have seen
Troy burn, and the most loving knight lie dead.
The world has been my mirror, time has been
My breath upon the glass; and men have said,
Age after age, in rapture and despair,
Love's poor few words before my image there.

I live, and am immortal; in my eyes
The sorrow of the world, and on my lips
The joy of life, mingle to make me wise;
Yet now the day is darkened with eclipse:
Who is there still lives for beauty? Still am I
The torch, but where's the moth that still dares die?

THE CRYING OF WATER

O water, voice of my heart, crying in the sand,
All night long crying with a mournful cry,
As I lie and listen, and cannot understand
The voice of my heart in my side or the voice of the sea,
O water crying for rest, is it I, is it I?
All night long the water is crying to me.

Unresting water, there shall never be rest
Till the last moon drop and the last tide fail,
And the fire of the end begin to burn in the west;
And the heart shall be weary and wonder and cry like the sea,
All life long crying without avail,
As the water all night long is crying to me.

NIGHT

The night's held breath,
And the stars' steady eyes:
Is it sleep, is it death,
In the earth, in the skies?

In my heart of hope,
In my restless will,
There is that should not stop
Though the earth stood still,

Though the heavens shook aghast,
As the frost shakes a tree,
And a strong wind cast
The stars in the sea.

WANDERER'S SONG

I have had enough of women, and enough of love,
But the land waits, and the sea waits, and day and night is enough;
Give me a long white road, and the gray wide path of the sea,
And the wind's will and the bird's will, and the heart-ache still in me.

Why should I seek out sorrow, and give gold for strife?
I have loved much and wept much, but tears and love are not life;
The grass calls to my heart, and the foam to my blood cries up,
And the sun shines and the road shines, and the wine's in the cup.

I have had enough of wisdom, and enough of mirth,
For the way's one and the end's one, and it's soon to the ends of the earth;
And it's then good-night and to bed, and if heels or heart ache,
Well, it's sound sleep and long sleep, and sleep too deep to wake.

DURING MUSIC

The music had the heat of blood,
A passion no words can reach;
We sat together, and understood
Our own heart's speech.

We had no need of word or sign,
The music spoke for us, and said
All that her eyes could read in mine
Or mine in hers had read.

NERVES

The modern malady of love is nerves.
Love, once a simple madness, now observes
The stages of his passionate disease,
And is twice sorrowful because he sees,
Inch by inch entering, the fatal knife.
O health of simple minds, give me your life,
And let me for one midnight cease to hear
The clock forever ticking in my ear,
The clock that tells the minutes in my brain
It is not love, nor love's despair, this pain
That shoots a witless, keener pang across
The simple agony of love and loss.
Nerves, nerves! O folly of a child who dreams
Of heaven and, waking in the darkness, screams.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Born at Sandymount, Ireland, in 1865, the son of John B. Yeats, the Irish artist, the greater part of William Butler Yeats' childhood was spent in the wild district of Sligo. Here he became imbued with the power and richness of native folk-lore; he drank in

the racy quality through quaint fairy stories and old wives' tales of the Irish peasantry. (Later he published a collection of these same stories.) He was educated at Godolphin School, Hammersmith, and Erasmus Smith School, Dublin, and devoted much of his student life to the study of art.

It was in the activities of a "Young Ireland" society that Yeats became identified with the new spirit; he dreamed of a national poetry that would be written in simple English and yet would be definitely Irish. In a few years he became one of the leaders in the Celtic revival, among his associates being J. M. Synge, Douglas Hyde, George Moore and Lady Gregory. He worked incessantly for the cause, both as propagandist and playwright; and, though his mysticism at times seemed the product of a cult, his symbolic dramas were acknowledged to be full of a personal spirituality. (See Preface.) *The Hour Glass* (1904), his second volume of plays, includes his best one-act dramas with the exception of *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894). His collected dramas were published in one volume, *Plays for an Irish Theatre*, in 1913 and a later, larger collected edition in 1923.

Others who followed Yeats intensified the Irish drama; they established a closer contact between the peasant and poet. No one, however, had so great a part in the actual shaping of modern drama in Ireland as Yeats. His *Deirdre* (1907), a beautiful retelling of the great Gaelic legend, is far more dramatic than the earlier plays; it is particularly interesting to read as a complement to Synge's more idiomatic play on the same theme, *Deirdre of the Sorrows.*

It was as a lyricist, however, that Yeats began his career, his first printed work being *Mosada, A Poem*, a rare booklet of which less than one hundred copies were issued in 1886. But it was with *The Countess Kathleen and Various Legends and Lyrics* (1892) that Yeats became a prominent figure in the Irish Renaissance. Since that date, he has published more than forty volumes of prose, plays and poetry, although he spends more time than any writer, with the possible exception of George Moore, revising and rewriting his work. None of his books are without his particular beauty, a transformation of old themes into a personal music; all of them are enriched by the turns of a mind both philosophic and fanciful. If one had to select only a few of these lavish volumes, the choice would probably be the early *Poems* (1895), *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), *Poems 1899-1905, The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917) and *Later Poems* (1922). A definitive *Collected Works* in six volumes was published by The Macmillan Company in 1924. This age has produced few lyrics more haunting than Yeats', few indeed as musical as those here reprinted.

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree," "The Song of Wandering Aengus," "The Rose of the World" are a few contemporary poems which have attained the permanence of folksongs. Nor is the later work less memorable. Modernity has produced no more vivid sonnet than the seemingly classic "Leda and the Swan."

Although Yeats evolved a highly original poetry, his work was strongly influenced, the influences, strangely combined, being particularly evident in his early work. His poems owe something to Blake, more to the French Symbolists; his plays show an obvious indebtedness to Maeterlinck and even to Ibsen. But while Yeats continually yielded to magnetic tremors, the point of his art swung to the true north. That north was within himself. More than any of his compatriots, Yeats accomplished "a more subtle rhythm, a more organic form." He perfected a music which, not essentially Gaelic, has come to be regarded as more characteristic than the Irish melodies of such latter-day harpers as Mangan, Gerald Griffin and their fellows.

Yeats's later books are less concerned with the wanderings of Oisin, Gaelic gods and ghouls, shadowy waters, and symbols too arbitrary to have more than specialized significance. He has sacrificed a certain melodic vagueness and gained intellectual clarity. *The Tower* (1928) in verse and *The Cutting of an Agate* (1919) in prose represent the maturer Yeats, the artist who has exchanged musical impalpability for linear values and an almost architectural solidity.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

AEDH WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread,
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire a-flame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And some one called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossoms in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done,
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

THE INDIAN UPON GOD

I passed along the water's edge below the humid trees,
My spirit rocked in evening light, the rushes round my knees,
My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs; and saw the moorfowl pace
All dripping on a grassy slope, and saw them cease to chase
Each other round in circles, and heard the eldest speak:
Who holds the world between His bill and made us strong or weak
Is an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky.
The rains are from His dripping wing, the moonbeams from His eye.
I passed a little further on and heard a lotus talk:
Who made the world and ruleth it, He hangeth on a stalk,
For I am in His image made, and all this tinkling tide
Is but a sliding drop of rain between His petals wide.
A little way within the gloom a roebuck raised his eyes
Brimful of starlight, and he said: *The Stamper of the Skies,*
He is a gentle roebuck; for how else, I pray, could He
Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle thing like me?
I passed a little further on and heard a peacock say:
Who made the grass and made the worms and made my feathers gay,
He is a monstrous peacock, and He waveth all the night
His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots of light.

AEDH TELLS OF THE ROSE IN HIS HEART

All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old,
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a lumbering cart,
The heavy steps of the plowman, splashing the wintry mold,
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart.

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told;
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll apart,
With the earth and the sky and the water, remade, like a casket of gold
For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart.

FAIRY SONG

(*From "The Land of Heart's Desire"*)

The wind blows out of the gates of day,
The wind blows over the lonely heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away,
While the faëries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air:
For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
"When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away!"

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

THE CAP AND BELLS

A Queen was beloved by a jester,
  And once when the owls grew still
He made his soul go upward
  And stand on her window sill.

In a long and straight blue garment,
It talked before morn was white,
And it had grown wise by thinking
Of a footfall hushed and light.

But the young queen would not listen;
She rose in her pale nightgown,
She drew in the brightening casement
And pushed the brass bolt down.

He bade his heart go to her,
When the bats cried out no more,
In a red and quivering garment
It sang to her through the door.

The tongue of it sweet with dreaming
Of a flutter of flower-like hair,
But she took up her fan from the table
And waved it off on the air.

"I've cap and bells," he pondered,
"I will send them to her and die."
And as soon as the morn had whitened
He left them where she went by.

She laid them upon her bosom,
Under a cloud of her hair,
And her red lips sang them a love song.
The stars grew out of the air.

She opened her door and her window,
And the heart and the soul came through,
To her right hand came the red one,
To her left hand came the blue.

They set up a noise like crickets,
A chattering wise and sweet,
And her hair was a folded flower,
And the quiet of love her feet.

AN OLD SONG RESUNG[1]

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

THE ROSE OF THE WORLD

Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died.

We and the laboring world are passing by:
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place,
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, frame of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face.

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode:
Before you were, or any hearts to beat,
Weary and kind, one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet.

THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER

I rise in the dawn, and I kneel and blow
Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow.
And then I must scrub, and bake, and sweep,
Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;
But the young lie long and dream in their bed
Of the matching of ribbons, the blue and the red,

[1] "This," Yeats wrote in a footnote in one of the early editions, "is an extension of three lines sung to me by an old woman of Ballisodare."

And their day goes over in idleness,
And they sigh if the wind but lift up a tress.
While I must work, because I am old
And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine and fifty swans.

The nineteenth Autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter, wheeling, in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold,
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes, when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

LEDA AND THE SWAN

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.
Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

HERBERT TRENCH

(Frederic) Herbert Trench was born in November, 1865, at Avoncore, County Cork, Ireland. He was educated at Haileybury and Oxford, became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and was Director of Special Enquiries at the Board of Education, from which he retired in 1908. After his extensive travels, he decided "to risk everything on literature," although he was at one time Director of the Haymarket Theatre. He died in July, 1923.

Although the greater part of his work is an attempt to scale profound heights, his poetry in "the grand manner" is rarely impressive; it is noble in intention but ineffectual as communication. Trench's all too frequent excursions into the realm of the metaphysical achieved far less than a few of his unambitious lyrics. Rid of his nebular philosophy, the shorter verses shine with a natural clarity. "I Heard a Soldier," "Song" and three or four others deserve more than passing patronization for their happy harmonies.

The best of Trench may be found in *Deirdre Wedded* (1900) and *Lyrics and Narrative Poems* (1911). *Selected Poems* as well as *The Complete Works of Herbert Trench*, edited by Harold Williams, were published in 1924.

I HEARD A SOLDIER

I heard a soldier sing some trifle
  Out in the sun-dried veldt alone.
He lay and cleaned his grimy rifle
  Idly, behind a stone.

"If after death, love, comes a waking,
  And in their camp so dark and still
The men of dust hear bugles, breaking
  Their halt upon the hill,

"To me the slow and silver pealing
  That then the last high trumpet pours,
Shall softer than the dawn come stealing,
  For, with its call, comes yours!"

What grief of love had he to stifle,
  Basking so idly by his stone,
That grimy soldier with his rifle
  Out in the veldt, alone?

SONG

She comes not when Noon is on the roses—
    Too bright is Day.
She comes not to the soul till it reposes
    From work and play.

But when Night is on the hills, and the great voices
    Roll in from sea,
By starlight and by candlelight and dreamlight
    She comes to me.

COME, LET US MAKE LOVE DEATHLESS

Come, let us make love deathless, thou and I,
  Seeing that our footing on earth is brief—
Seeing that her multitudes sweep out to die
  Mocking at all that passes their belief.

For standard of our love not theirs we take:
If we go hence today
Fill the high cup that is so soon to break
With richer wine than they!

Aye, since beyond these walls no heavens there be
Joy to revive or wasted youth repair,
I'll not bedim the lovely flame in thee
Nor sully the sad splendor that we wear.
Great be the love, if with the lover dies
Our greatness past recall,
And nobler for the fading of those eyes
The world seen once for all.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Born at Bombay, India, December 30, 1865 (Joseph) Rudyard Kipling was educated at the United Services College in England. He returned, however, to India and took a position on the staff of *The Lahore Civil and Military Gazette*, writing for the Indian press until about 1890, when he went to England, where, with the exception of a short sojourn in America, he has lived ever since. Even while he was still in India, he achieved a popular as well as a literary success with his dramatic tales and high-spirited ballads of Anglo-Indian life.

Soldiers Three (1888) was the first of six collections of short stories brought out in "Wheeler's Railway Library." They were followed by the more sensitive *Plain Tales from the Hills, Under the Deodars* and *The Phantom 'Rikshaw*, which contains two of the best and most convincing ghost-stories in recent literature.

These tales, however, display only one side of Kipling's extraordinary talents. As a writer of children's stories, he has few living equals. *Wee Willie Winkie*, which contains that stirring, heroic fragment "Drums of the Fore and Aft," is only a trifle less delightful than his more obviously juvenile collections. *Just-So Stories* and the two *Jungle Books* (prose interspersed with lively rhymes) are for young people of all ages. *Kim*, the novel of a super-Mowgli grown up, is a more mature canvas painted against the background of the great Indian roads.

Considered solely as a poet (see Preface), Kipling is one of the most vigorous figures of his time. The spirit of romance surges under his realities. His brisk lines conjure up a countryside in autumn, the tingle of salt spray, the rude sentiment of ruder na-

tures, the snapping of a banner, the lurch and rumble of the sea. His poetry is woven of the stuff of myths, but it never loses its hold on actualities. Kipling himself in his poem "The Benefactors" (from *The Years Between* [1919]) writes:

> Ah! What avails the classic bent
> And what the cultured word,
> Against the undoctored incident
> That actually occurred?

What attracted the average reader to Kipling was this attitude to the world's work. Where others sang of lilies and leisure, Kipling celebrated difficulties, duty, hard labor; where others evoked Greek nymphs, he hailed bridge-builders, engineers, sweating stokers—all those who exulted in the job. If he sometimes lost his head in a general hurrahing, his high spirits carried off specious prophesying and brought sing-song meters to a pitch of excitement. Gusto was not the least of his gods.

Kipling won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. His varied poems were collected in a remarkable one-volume *Inclusive Edition* (1885-1918), an indispensable part of any student's library. Subsequent to this collection, a new volume, *The Years Between*, was published in 1919.

The best and worst of Kipling are obvious to the least critical reader. His worst is inherent in a heartiness which is too loud and too prolonged, a vehemence which changes robustiousness into rowdiness. Max Beerbohm excoriated this Kipling in the cartoon showing an irate little man, helmeted and spectacled, blowing a tin trumpet, waving a Union Jack, and dancing himself into a paroxysm of patriotic fury. This Kipling, overcome by the conquering chauvinism of the Colonist, loses his sense of values, belittling the weak to the tune of British imperialism. The tune, one must admit, is an attractive one, and even those who object to its burden of bombast have learned to whistle it by heart. The rhythms are often the beat of journalistic verse, but they communicate to the "average man" something he seeks and which he would not recognize in finer measures. It is indisputable that Kipling too often tries to force beauty in a rape of violence. But there are also those poems in which, as T. Earle Welby says in *A Popular History of English Poetry*, "he has been humbler and more passive, and in which beauty is a voluntary captive. One emotion has never failed to inspire him, the inverted nostalgia of the man returned home and yearning for far and once familiar scenes of exile. It arouses all the poet in him, puts wistfulness into his generally brazen music, clears his style of semi-Biblical claptrap, and sets his extraordinary descriptive talent to work more legitimately

than usual." Such a descriptive talent is illustrated by "Mandalay," "Fuzzy Wuzzy," "Chant-Pagan," "The Return," even by such a stanza as:

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
  Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,
Mountains which never let you near,
  An' stars to all eternity;
An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
  The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills—
  These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Such work shows that Kipling, though a poet, is something beside a poet. He is not merely a writer for those who enjoy writing, but the singer of those who have never risen to an appreciation of song. A people's balladist, he has composed a dozen songs which are the popular classics of today and the folk-tunes of tomorrow.

GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin an' beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental *bhisti*,[1] Gunga Din.

  It was "Din! Din! Din!
  You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
  Hi! *slippy hitherao!*
  Water, get it! *Panee lao!*[2]
  You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,

[1] The *bhisti*, or water-carrier, attached to regiments in India, is often one of the most devoted of the Queen's servants. He is also appreciated by the men.

[2] Bring water swiftly.

An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a twisty piece o' rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted *"Harry By!"* [1]
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some *juldee* [2] in it,
Or I'll *marrow* [3] you this minute,
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done,
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is *mussick* [4] on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire."
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide,
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!

It was "Din! Din! Din!
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-files shout:
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight

[1] Tommy Atkins' equivalent for "O Brother!"
[2] Speed.
[3] Hit you.
[4] Water-skin.

With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' 'e plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water—green;
It was crawlin' an' it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground an' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake, git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a *dooli* lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died:
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to pore damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din!

Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Tho' I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

THE RETURN[1]

Peace is declared, and I return
To 'Ackneystadt, but not the same;
Things 'ave transpired which made me learn
The size and meanin' of the game.

[1] From *The Five Nations*. Copyright by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.

I did no more than others did,
  I don't know where the change began;
I started as a average kid,
  I finished as a thinkin' man.

If England was what England seems
  An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
  'Ow quick we'd drop 'er! But she ain't!

Before my gappin' mouth could speak
  I 'eard it in my comrade's tone;
I saw it on my neighbor's cheek
  Before I felt it flush my own.
An' last it come to me—not pride,
  Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied),
  The makin's of a bloomin' soul.

Rivers at night that cluck an' jeer,
  Plains which the moonshine turns to sea,
Mountains that never let you near,
  An' stars to all eternity;
An' the quick-breathin' dark that fills
  The 'ollows of the wilderness,
When the wind worries through the 'ills—
  These may 'ave taught me more or less.

Towns without people, ten times took,
  An' ten times left an' burned at last;
An' starvin' dogs that come to look
  For owners when a column passed;
An' quiet, 'omesick talks between
  Men, met by night, you never knew
Until—'is face—by shellfire seen—
  Once—an' struck off. They taught me, too.

The day's lay-out—the mornin' sun
  Beneath your 'at-brim as you sight;
The dinner-'ush from noon till one,
  An' the full roar that lasts till night;

An' the pore dead that look so old
An' was so young an hour ago,
An' legs tied down before they're cold—
These are the things which make you know.

Also Time runnin' into years—
A thousand Places left be'ind—
An' Men from both two 'emispheres
Discussin' things of every kind;
So much more near than I 'ad known,
So much more great than I 'ad guessed—
An' me, like all the rest, alone—
But reachin' out to all the rest!

So 'ath it come to me—not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied)
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.
But now, discharged, I fall away
To do with little things again. . . .
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
Look after me in Thamesfontein!

If England was what England seems
An' not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass, an' paint,
'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! But she ain't!

THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

When the flush of a newborn sun fell first on Eden's green and gold,
Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched with a stick in the mold;
And the first rude sketch that the world had seen was joy to his mighty heart,
Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Wherefore he called to his wife and fled to fashion his work anew—
The first of his race who cared a fig for the first, most dread review;

And he left his lore to the use of his sons—and that was a glorious gain
When the Devil chuckled: "Is it Art?" in the ear of the branded Cain.

They builded a tower to shiver the sky and wrench the stars apart,
Till the Devil grunted behind the bricks: "It's striking, but is it Art?"
The stone was dropped by the quarry-side, and the idle derrick swung,
While each man talked of the aims of art, and each in an alien tongue.

They fought and they talked in the north and the south, they talked and they fought in the west,
Till the waters rose on the jabbering land, and the poor Red Clay had rest—
Had rest till the dank blank-canvas dawn when the dove was preened to start,
And the Devil bubbled below the keel: "It's human, but is it Art?"

The tale is old as the Eden Tree—as new as the new-cut tooth—
For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows he is master of Art and Truth;
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane: "You did it, but was it Art?"

We have learned to whittle the Eden Tree to the shape of a surplice-peg,
We have learned to bottle our parents twain in the yolk of an addled egg,
We know that the tail must wag the dog, as the horse is drawn by the cart;
But the Devil whoops, as he whooped of old: "It's clever, but is it Art?"

When the flicker of London's sun falls faint on the club-room's
green and gold,
The sons of Adam sit them down and scratch with their pens
in the mold—
They scratch with their pens in the mold of their graves, and
the ink and the anguish start
When the Devil mutters behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is
it Art?"

Now, if we could win to the Eden Tree where the four great
rivers flow,
And the wreath of Eve is red on the turf as she left it long
ago,
And if we could come when the sentry slept, and softly scurry
through,
By the favor of God we might know as much—as our father
Adam knew.

AN ASTROLOGER'S SONG[1]

To the Heavens above us
Oh, look and behold
The Planets that love us
All harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

All thought, all desires,
That are under the sun,
Are one with their fires,
As we also are one:
All matter, all spirit,
All fashion, all frame,
Receive and inherit
Their strength from the same.

[1] From *Actions and Reactions*. Copyright by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.

(Oh, man that deniest
All power save thine own,
Their power in the highest
Is mightily shown.
Not less in the lowest
That power is made clear.
Oh, man, if thou knowest,
What treasure is here!)

Earth quakes in her throes
And we wonder for why!
But the blind planet knows
When her ruler is nigh;
And, attuned since Creation
To perfect accord,
She thrills in her station
And yearns to her Lord.

The waters have risen,
The springs are unbound—
The floods break their prison,
And ravin around.
No rampart withstands 'em,
Their fury will last,
Till the Sign that commands 'em
Sinks low or swings past.

Through abysses unproven
And gulfs beyond thought,
Our portion is woven,
Our burden is brought.
Yet They that prepare it,
Whose Nature we share,
Make us who must bear it
Well able to bear.

Though terrors o'ertake us
We'll not be afraid.
No power can unmake us
Save that which has made.

Nor yet beyond reason
Or hope shall we fall—
All things have their season,
And Mercy crowns all!

Then doubt not, ye fearful—
The Eternal is King—
Up, heart, and be cheerful,
And lustily sing:—
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And, guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

DANNY DEEVER

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Color-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can 'ear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square—they're hangin' him today;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard!" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" says Files-on-Parade.
"A touch of sun, a touch of sun," the Color-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round.
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground:
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound—
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's sleepin' out an' far tonight," the Color-Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Color-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'—you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Color-Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer today,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

MANDALAY

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea,
There's a Burma girl a-settin', an' I know she thinks o' me;
For the wind is in the palm-trees, an' the temple-bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!"
Come you back to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

'Er petticut was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,
An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-let—jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen,
An' I seed her fust a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot:

Bloomin' idol made o' mud—
What they called the Great Gawd Budd—
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!
On the road to Mandalay—

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was droppin' slow,
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing *"Kulla-lo-lo!"*
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' her cheek agin my cheek
We useter watch the steamers an' the *hathis* pilin' teak.
Elephints a-pilin' teak
In the sludgy, squdgy creek,
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf afraid to speak!
On the road to Mandalay—

But that's all shove be'ind me—long ago an' fur away,
An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from the Benk to Mandalay;
An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year sodger tells:
"If you've 'eard the East a-callin', why, you won't 'eed nothin' else."
No! you won't 'eed nothin' else
But them spicy garlic smells
An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinky temple bells!
On the road to Mandalay—

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin'-stones,
An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my bones;
Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand,
An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?
Beefy face an' grubby 'and—
Law! wot *do* they understand?
I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!
On the road to Mandalay—

Ship me somewheres east of Suez where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments, an' a man can raise a thirst;

For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be—
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea—
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay,
With our sick beneath the awnings when we went to Mandalay!
Oh, the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

"FUZZY-WUZZY"

(*Soudan Expeditionary Force*)

We've fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Sua*kim*,
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certifikit, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Kyber 'ills,
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman guv us Irriwaddy chills,
An' a Zulu *impi* dished us up in style:
But all we ever got from such as they
Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.

Then 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and the kid;
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went an' did.
We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you bruk the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,
So we must certify the skill 'e's shown
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords;
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
A 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last a 'ealthy Tommy for a year.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which is no more,
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore;
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.
'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb!
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't care a damn
For the Regiment o' British Infantree.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air—
You big black boundin' beggar—for you bruk a British square.

EVARRA AND HIS GODS

Read here,
This is the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because the city gave him of her gold,
Because the caravans brought turquoises,
Because his life was sheltered by the King,
So that no man should maim him, none should steal,
Or break his rest with babble in the streets
When he was weary after toil, he made
An image of his God in gold and pearl,
With turquoise diadem and human eyes,
A wonder in the sunshine, known afar
And worshiped by the King; but, drunk with pride,
Because the city bowed to him for God,
He wrote above the shrine: "*Thus Gods are made,*
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die."
And all the city praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because his city had no wealth to give,
Because the caravans were spoiled afar,
Because his life was threatened by the King,
So that all men despised him in the streets,
He hacked the living rock, with sweat and tears,
And reared a God against the morning-gold,
A terror in the sunshine, seen afar,
And worshiped by the King; but, drunk with pride,
Because the city fawned to bring him back,
He carved upon the plinth: "*Thus Gods are made,*
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die."
And all the people praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because he lived among the simple folk,
Because his village was between the hills,
Because he smeared his cheeks with blood of ewes,
He cut an idol from a fallen pine,

Smeared blood upon its cheeks, and wedged a shell
Above its brow for eye, and gave it hair
Of trailing moss, and plaited straw for crown.
And all the village praised him for his craft,
And brought him butter, honey, milk, and curds.
Wherefore, because the shoutings drove him mad,
He scratched upon that log: "*Thus Gods are made,*
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die."
And all the people praised him. . . . Then he died.

Read here the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.
Because his God decreed one clot of blood
Should swerve a hair's-breadth from the pulse's path,
And chafe his brain, Evarra mowed alone,
Rag-wrapped, among the cattle in the fields,
Counting his fingers, jesting with the trees,
And mocking at the mist, until his God
Drove him to labor. Out of dung and horns
Dropped in the mire he made a monstrous God,
Abhorrent, shapeless, crowned with plantain tufts.
And when the cattle lowed at twilight-time,
He dreamed it was the clamor of lost crowds,
And howled among the beasts: "*Thus Gods are made,*
And whoso makes them otherwise shall die."
Thereat the cattle bellowed . . . Then he died.

Yet at the last he came to Paradise,
And found his own four Gods, and that he wrote;
And marveled, being very near to God,
What oaf on earth had made his toil God's law,
Till God said, mocking: "Mock not. These be thine."
Then cried Evarra: "I have sinned!"—"Not so.
If thou hadst written otherwise, thy Gods
Had rested in the mountain and the mine,
And I were poorer by four wondrous Gods,
And thy more wondrous law, Evarra. Thine,
Servant of shouting crowds and lowing kine."
Thereat with laughing mouth, but tear-wet eyes,
Evarra cast his Gods from Paradise.

This is the story of Evarra—man—
Maker of Gods in lands beyond the sea.

THE LADIES[1]

I've taken my fun where I've found it;
I've rogued an' I've ranged in my time;
I've 'ad my pickin' o' sweet'earts,
An' four o' the lot was prime.
One was an 'arf-caste widow,
One was a woman at Prome,
One was the wife of a *jemadar-sais,*[2]
An' one is a girl at 'ome.

Now I aren't no 'and with the ladies,
For, takin' 'em all along,
You never can say till you've tried 'em,
An' then you are like to be wrong.
There's times when you'll think that you mightn't,
There's times when you'll know that you might;
But the things you will learn from the Yellow an' Brown,
They'll 'elp you a lot with the White!

I was a young un at 'Oogli,
Shy as a girl to begin;
Aggie de Castrer she made me,
An' Aggie was clever as sin;
Older than me, but my first un—
More like a mother she were—
Showed me the way to promotion an' pay,
An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then I was ordered to Burma,
Actin' in charge o' Bazar,
An' I got me a tiddy live 'eathen
Through buyin' supplies off 'er pa.
Funny an' yellow an' faithful—
Doll in a teacup she were,
But we lived on the square, like a true-married pair,
An' I learned about women from 'er!

[1] From *The Seven Seas.* Copyright by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.
[2] Head-groom.

Then we was shifted to Neemuch
(Or I might ha' been keepin' 'er now),
An' I took with a shiny she-devil,
The wife of a nigger at Mhow;
Taught me the gypsy-folks' *bolee;* [1]
Kind o' volcano she were,
For she knifed me one night 'cause I wished she was white,
And I learned about women from 'er!

Then I come 'ome in the trooper,
'Long of a kid o' sixteen—
Girl from a convent at Meerut,
The straightest I ever 'ave seen.
Love at first sight was 'er trouble,
She didn't know what it were;
An' I wouldn't do such, 'cause I liked 'er too much,
But—I learned about women from 'er!

I've taken my fun where I've found it,
An' now I must pay for my fun,
For the more you 'ave known o' the others
The less you will settle to one;
An' the end of it's sittin' and thinkin',
An' dreamin' Hell-fires to see;
So be warned by my lot (which I know you will not),
An' learn about women from me!

What did the Colonel's Lady think?
Nobody never knew.
Somebody asked the Sergeant's wife,
An' she told 'em true!
When you get to a man in the case,
They're like as a row of pins—
For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins!

[1] Slang.

BOOTS[1]

(Infantry Columns of the Earlier War)

We're foot—slog—slog—slog—sloggin' over Africa!
Foot—foot—foot—foot—sloggin' over Africa—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Seven—six—eleven—five—nine-an'-twenty mile today—
Four—eleven—seventeen—thirty-two the day before—
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Don't—don't—don't—don't—look at what's in front of you
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again);
Men—men—men—men—men go mad with watchin' 'em,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

Try—try—try—try—to think o' something different—
Oh—my—God—keep—me from goin' lunatic!
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Count—count—count—count—the bullets in the bandoliers;
If—your—eyes—drop—they will get atop o' you
(Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again,)—
There's no discharge in the war!

We—can—stick—out—'unger, thirst, an' weariness,
But—not—not—not—not the chronic sight of 'em—
Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

'Tain't—so—bad—by—day because o' company,
But night—brings—long—strings o' forty thousand million
Boots—boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again.
There's no discharge in the war!

[1] From *The Five Nations*. Copyright by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.

I—'ave—marched—six—weeks in 'Ell an certify
It—is—not—fire—devils dark or anything
But boots—boots—boots, movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

THE LAST CHANTEY[1]

"And there was no more sea"

Thus said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,
Calling to the Angels and the Souls in their degree:
"Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall We gather up the sea?"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us—
Our bones we'll leave the barracout', and God may sink the sea!"

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayed Him:
"Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe?
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the sea."

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed breakers flee):
"I have watch and ward to keep
O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honor from me if Ye take away the sea!"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we.
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamor for a vengeance on the sea?"

[1] From *The Seven Seas.* Copyright by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.

Then said the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard:
"Kenneled in the picaroon a weary band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drowsed the long tides idle till Thy Trumpets tore the sea."

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God:
"Once we frapped a ship, and she labored woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta by the sea!"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily:
"Our thumbs are rough and tarred,
And the tune is something hard—
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such as seamen use at sea?"

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-adventurers—
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity:
"Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's;
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we were masters of the sea!"

Up spake the soul of a gray Gothavn 'speckshioner—
(He that led the flenching in the fleets of fair Fundee):
"Oh, the ice-blink white and near,
And the bowhead breaching clear!
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow in the sea?"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Crying: "Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lea!
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and we'll beat to open sea!"

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good sea up to Him,
And 'stablished its borders unto all eternity,
That such as have no pleasure
For to praise the Lord by measure,
They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the sea.

Sun, Wind, and Cloud shall fail not from the face of it,
Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar flying free;
And the ships shall go abroad
To the Glory of the Lord
Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave them back their sea!

SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL[1]

Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all—
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till they die.

What do it matter where or 'ow we die,
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all—
The different ways that different things are done,
An' men an' women lovin' in this world;
Takin' our chances as they come along,
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good?

In cash or credit—no, it aren't no good;
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,
Unless you lived your life but one day long,
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done!
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,
In various situations round the world—
For 'im that doth not work must surely die;
But that's no reason man should labor all
'Is life on one same shift—life's none so long.

[1] From *The Seven Seas*. Copyright by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along.
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,
For something in my 'ead upset it all,
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 't was for good,
An' out at sea, be'eld the dock-lights die,
An' met my mate—the wind that tramps the world!

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another—likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world! Whatever she 'ath done—
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.
So write, before I die, " 'E liked it all!"

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

Dora Mary Sigerson (Shorter) was born at Richmond Terrace, Dublin, Ireland, August 16, 1866. Her childhood was spent in Ireland and her life there bubbled with the subdued stir of Irish politics and the fermentation of the intellectual circles of which her father, Dr. Sigerson, was a leader. Her marriage to the Englishman, Clement Shorter, removed her homestead from Ireland, but not her heart, it being claimed that the massacres of 1916 were indirectly responsible for her death. Her nostalgia is expressed in a poem, "Ireland," of which the first and last verses are:

'Twas the dream of a God,
  And the mold of His hand,
That you shook 'neath His stroke,
That you trembled and broke
  To this beautiful land.
* * * *
I have left you behind
  In the path of the past,
With the white breath of flowers,
With the best of God's hours,
  I have left you at last.

She was said to have been as rich in beauty as in charm, a charm that pervades her verse and much of her other writings.

Francis Thompson, Meredith and Masefield, all praised her Irish stories, Meredith saying that she was "the best ballad writer since Sir Walter Scott." Her bibliography credits her with eighteen volumes, including novels, fairy-tales, stories, reminiscences and poems. Of the poems the best two volumes are the early *Ballads and Poems* and the later *Sixteen Dead Men and Other Poems of Easter Week.* She died January 6, 1918.

Although she has waned in popular esteem, her loss of popularity seems regrettable. Never a great poet, her verse is instinct with feeling and is written in straightforward syntax that should not suffer from its timeliness.

THE SEA-MEW

I had loved the pretty birds that by my window sung,—
The gentle thrush that had his nest the perfumed pines among;
The chaffinch with his sudden note, his song so clear and bold;
The sad rhyme of the robin, too, that came when winds grew cold;

The happy lark whose benison fell from the sunny sky;
The blackbird with his golden lute that serenaded by;
The nightingale that through the night told his low rosary;
The finches, with their little tunes, were all beloved by me.

I leaned to hear each lovely note through each enchanted day!
And thought no minstrelsy so fine, while all content I lay,
When to my ear, across the sky, I heard a sea-bird's scream,
And flapping slow across the blue, I saw him flash and gleam.

I cared not then for singing birds, I loved the sun no more.
I heard the plashing of the waves upon a far-off shore,
And lonely, lonely cried my heart in answer to its call—
Ah, best I held the sea-mew's note that had no song at all!

"Æ"

George William Russell was born April 10, 1867, in the small town of Lurgan, County Armagh, Ireland. At sixteen he studied painting in the School of Art in Dublin, becoming the close friend of W. B. Yeats and, later, James Stephens. While working as an

accountant in a draper's establishment, he read much in Oriental mystical literature, becoming the leader of a small theosophical group. At that time he wrote an article for *The Irish Theosophist* under the pseudonym "Æon" but the compositor omitted the two last letters and the piece appeared under the diphthong "Æ," a pen-name which Russell adopted and used ever since.

In 1897 he became active in Irish politics. For several years he devoted himself to establishing coöperative societies, aiding rural communities, editing (in 1904) *The Irish Homestead* and (in 1923) *The Irish Statesman.*

With maturity he cultivated all his gifts, alternating and sometimes combining the rôles of sociologist, public speaker, poet, painter and propagandist. His landscapes have the misty-mystical color of his poems, which, unconcerned with issues of agrarianism or, for that matter, any other problem, are serene in their otherworldliness. "Continuity" and "The Secret" embody his faith *in petto.*

The best of his poetry is in *Homeward Songs by the Way* (1894) and *The Earth Breath and Other Poems* (1897). Yeats has spoken of these poems as "revealing in all things a kind of scented flame consuming them from within." *Collected Poems,* including later work, appeared in 1914. A more recent collection, *Mid-Summer Eve* (1928) contains only twelve poems, but its spirit is moving and stamped with authenticity. It is the clear expression of one who is not so much God-fearing as God-loving.

THE GREAT BREATH

Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose,
Withers once more the old blue flower of day:
There where the ether like a diamond glows,
Its petals fade away.

A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air;
Sparkle the delicate dews, the distant snows;
The great deep thrills—for through it everywhere
The breath of Beauty blows.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,
Molded to her by deep and deeper breath,
Near'd to the hour when Beauty breathes her last
And knows herself in death.

FROLIC

The children were shouting together
And racing along the sands,
A glimmer of dancing shadows,
A dovelike flutter of hands.

The stars were shouting in heaven,
The sun was chasing the moon:
The game was the same as the children's,
They danced to the self-same tune.

The whole of the world was merry,
One joy from the vale to the height,
Where the blue woods of twilight encircled
The love-lawns of the light.

THE SECRET

One thing in all things have I seen:
One thought has haunted earth and air:
Clangor and silence both have been
Its palace chambers. Everywhere

I saw the mystic vision flow
And live in men and woods and streams,
Until I could no longer know
The dream of life from my own dreams.

Sometimes it rose like fire in me
Within the depths of my own mind,
And spreading to infinity,
It took the voices of the wind:

It scrawled the human mystery—
Dim heraldry—on light and air;
Wavering along the starry sea
I saw the flying vision there.

Each fire that in God's temple lit
Burns fierce before the inner shrine,
Dimmed as my fire grew near to it
And darkened at the light of mine.

At last, at last, the meaning caught—
The Spirit wears its diadem;
It shakes its wondrous plumes of thought
And trails the stars along with them.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Far up the dim twilight fluttered
  Moth-wings of vapor and flame:
The lights danced over the mountains,
  Star after star they came.

The lights grew thicker unheeded,
  For silent and still were we;
Our hearts were drunk with a beauty
  Our eyes could never see.

CONTINUITY

No sign is made while empires pass,
The flowers and stars are still His care,
The constellations hid in grass,
The golden miracles in air.

Life in an instant will be rent,
Where death is glittering blind and wild—
The Heavenly Brooding is intent
To that last instant on Its child.

It breathes the glow in brain and heart,
Life is made magical. Until
Body and spirit are apart,
The Everlasting works Its will.

In that wild orchid that your feet
In their next falling shall destroy,
Minute and passionate and sweet
The Mighty Master holds His joy.

Though the crushed jewels droop and fade,
The Artist's labors will not cease,
And of the ruins shall be made
Some yet more lovely masterpiece.

Richard Le Gallienne, who, in spite of his long residence in the United States, must be considered an English poet, was born at Liverpool in 1867. He entered on a business career soon after leaving Liverpool College, but, after five or six years, gave up commercial life to become a man of letters.

His early work was strongly influenced by the artificialities of the esthetic movement (see Preface); the indebtedness to Oscar Wilde is especially evident. A little later, Keats was the dominant influence, and *English Poems* (1892) betray how deep and well-nigh undermining were Le Gallienne's admirations. His more recent poems in *The Lonely Dancer* (1913) show a keener individuality. His prose fancies are well known—particularly *The Book Bills of Narcissus* and the high-spirited fantasia, *The Quest of the Golden Girl. The Junkman and Other Poems* appeared in 1921.

Le Gallienne came to America about 1905 and, engaging in spasmodic journalism, has lived ever since in Rowayton, Conn., and New York City.

A BALLAD OF LONDON

Ah, London! London! our delight,
Great flower that opens but at night,
Great City of the midnight sun,
Whose day begins when day is done.

Lamp after lamp against the sky
Opens a sudden beaming eye,
Leaping alight on either hand,
The iron lilies of the Strand.

Like dragonflies, the hansoms hover,
With jeweled eyes, to catch the lover;
The streets are full of lights and loves,
Soft gowns, and flutter of soiled doves.

The human moths about the light
Dash and cling close in dazed delight,
And burn and laugh, the world and wife,
For this is London, this is life!

Upon thy petals butterflies,
But at thy root, some say, there lies
A world of weeping trodden things,
Poor worms that have not eyes or wings.

From out corruption of their woe
Springs this bright flower that charms us so,
Men die and rot deep out of sight
To keep this jungle-flower bright.

Paris and London, World-Flowers twain
Wherewith the World-Tree blooms again,
Since Time hath gathered Babylon,
And withered Rome still withers on.

Sidon and Tyre were such as ye,
How bright they shone upon the tree!
But Time hath gathered, both are gone,
And no man sails to Babylon.

REGRET

One asked of regret,
  And I made reply:
To have held the bird,
  And let it fly;
To have seen the star
  For a moment nigh,
And lost it
  Through a slothful eye;
To have plucked the flower
  And cast it by;
To have one only hope—
  To die.

ERNEST DOWSON

Ernest Dowson was born at Belmont Hill in Kent, August 2, 1867. His great-uncle was Alfred Domett (Browning's "Waring"), one time Prime Minister of New Zealand. Dowson, practically an invalid all his life, lived intermittently in London, Paris, Normandy and on the Riviera. He was reckless with himself and, as

disease weakened him more and more, hid in miserable surroundings; for almost two years he lived in sordid supper-houses known as "cabmen's shelters."

He formed only one passion but that one was final and devastating. He fell in love with a restaurant-keeper's daughter, paid court to her with the most delicate reserve, and she—impatient alike of his words and his reticences—married a waiter. The shock to Dowson was profound. He grew more and more withdrawn, even his contacts with fellow-members of the Rhymers' Club became slighter. He sank into despondency and dissipation; he literally drank himself to death.

Dowson's delicate and fantastic poetry was an attempt to escape from a reality too brutal for him. He, himself, was his own pitiful "Pierrot of the Minute," throwing "roses, riotously with the throng"—even though the throng ignored him. His passionate lyric, "I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion," a triumph of despair and disillusion, is an outburst in which Dowson epitomized himself. "One of the greatest lyrical poems of our time," writes Arthur Symons; "in it he has for once said everything, and he has said it to an intoxicating and perhaps immortal music."

Yet, in spite of the fact that this familiar poem has been quoted in almost every contemporary collection, several of Dowson's less well-known poems strike a higher and far more resonant note. Among such poems are "Extreme Unction," possibly the finest expression of his Catholicism, and "A Last Word," which expresses his revulsion from the "perverse and aimless band."

Dowson's poems of decadence are no less typical than his religious poems; both, unlike the product of much of his period, are sincere. His mysticism, no less than his idealization of preciosity, is an esthetic one. Unable to find fulfillment in either, he wavered, as C. E. Andrews and M. O. Percival say in *Poetry of the Nineties*, "between heaping garlands upon the altars of Aphrodite and lighting candles to the blessed Virgin."

Dowson died obscure in 1900, one of the least effectual but one of the most gifted of modern minor poets. His life was a tragedy of a weak nature buffeted by a strong and merciless environment. His poetry, highly special but never specious, survives.

A LAST WORD

Let us go hence: the night is now at hand;
The day is overworn, the birds all flown;
And we have reaped the crops the gods have sown;
Despair and death; deep darkness o'er the land,

Broods like an owl; we cannot understand
  Laughter or tears, for we have only known
  Surpassing vanity: vain things alone
Have driven our perverse and aimless band.

Let us go hence, somewhither strange and cold,
  To Hollow Lands where just men and unjust
  Find end of labor, where's rest for the old,
Freedom to all from love and fear and lust.
Twine our torn hands! O pray the earth enfold
Our life-sick hearts and turn them into dust.

NON SUM QUALIS ERAM BONAE SUB REGNO CYNARAE

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
  When I awoke and found the dawn was gray:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

SPLEEN

I was not sorrowful, I could not weep,
And all my memories were put to sleep.

I watched the river grow more white and strange,
All day till evening I watched it change.

All day till evening I watched the rain
Beat wearily upon the window-pane.

I was not sorrowful, but only tired
Of everything that ever I desired.

Her lips, her eyes, all day became to me
The shadow of a shadow utterly.

All day mine hunger for her heart became
Oblivion, until the evening came.

And left me sorrowful, inclined to weep,
With all my memories that could not sleep.

TO ONE IN BEDLAM

With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;
Those scentless wisps of straw that, miserable, line
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares.

Pedant and pitiful. O, how his rapt gaze wars
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,
And make his melancholy germane to the stars?

O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,
Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,
All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!

EXTREME UNCTION

Upon the eyes, the lips, the feet,
  On all the passages of sense,
The atoning oil is spread with sweet
  Renewal of lost innocence.

The feet, that lately ran so fast
  To meet desire, are soothly sealed;
The eyes that were so often cast
  On vanity, are touched and healed.

From troublous sights and sounds set free;
  In such a twilight hour of breath
Shall one retrace his life, or see
  Through shadows the true face of death?

Vials of mercy! Sacring oils!
  I know not where nor when I come,
Nor through what wanderings and toils,
  To crave of you Viaticum.

Yet, when the walls of flesh grow weak,
  In such an hour, it well may be,
Through mist and darkness, light will break,
  And each anointed sense will see!

"YOU WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD ME"

You would have understood me had you waited;
  I could have loved you, dear! as well as he:
Had we not been impatient, dear! and fated
      Always to disagree.

What is the use of speech? Silence were fitter:
  Lest we should still be wishing things unsaid.
Though all the words we ever spake were bitter,
      Shall I reproach you, dead?

Nay, let this earth, your portion, likewise cover
  All the old anger, setting us apart:
Always, in all, in truth was I your lover;
      Always, I held your heart.

I have met other women who were tender,
As you were cold, dear! with a grace as rare.
Think you, I turned to them, or made surrender,
I who had found you fair?

Had we been patient, dear! ah, had you waited,
I had fought death for you, better than he:
But from the very first, dear! we were fated
Always to disagree.

Late, late, I come to you, now death discloses
Love that in life was not to be our part:
On your low lying mound between the roses,
Sadly I cast my heart.

I would not waken you: nay! this is fitter;
Death and the darkness give you unto me;
Here we who loved so, were so cold and bitter,
Hardly can disagree.

ENVOY

(*Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam*)

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

LIONEL JOHNSON

Born in 1867, at Broadstairs in Kent, Lionel (Pigot) Johnson received a classical education at Oxford, his poetry being a faithful reflection of his studies in Greek and Latin literatures. Though he allied himself with the modern Irish poets, his Celtic origin is a literary myth; Johnson, having been converted to Catholicism in

1891, became imbued with Catholic and, later, with Irish traditions. Yeats, who became his intimate friend, says it was Johnson's habit to sleep all day and read and write all night, the ordinary world about him having no significance to the recluse. "In my library," Johnson said, "I have all the knowledge I need of the world."

Before any of his poetry was collected in a volume, he published a book on *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894) which, though written before the appearance of *Jude the Obscure* or *The Dynasts*, remains one of the most sensitive and stimulating studies of Hardy yet written. His verse, published originally among the bizarre novelties of *The Yellow Book*, was curiously cool and removed; he seemed, as one of his associates has said, a young monk surrounded by dancing pagans. "Divine austerity" is the goal to which his verse aspires. While sometimes over-decorated, it is chastely designed, and, like that of the Cavalier poets of the seventeenth century, fiercely devotional.

Johnson was one of the many poets to whom conversion to the Church of Rome supplied not only a new color but a new impetus. It is a subject rich in speculation why this period should have yielded so many artists who turned to the Catholic Church for inspiration in their life and work, among the most eminent converts, besides Johnson, being Alice Meynell, Ernest Dowson, Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley.

Poems (1895) and *Ireland* (1897) were published during his lifetime; a posthumous collection of essays, *Post Liminium*, appeared in 1911. A collected edition of his poems was brought out in 1915. Johnson died tragically in 1902.

MYSTIC AND CAVALIER

Go from me: I am one of those who fall.
What! hath no cold wind swept your heart at all,
In my sad company? Before the end,
Go from me, dear my friend!

Yours are the victories of light: your feet
Rest from good toil, where rest is brave and sweet:
But after warfare in a mourning gloom,
I rest in clouds of doom.

Have you not read so, looking in these eyes?
Is it the common light of the pure skies
Lights up their shadowy depths? The end is set:
Though the end be not yet.

When gracious music stirs, and all is bright,
And beauty triumphs through a courtly night;
When I too joy, a man like other men:
Yet, am I like them, then?

And in the battle, when the horsemen sweep
Against a thousand deaths, and fall on sleep:
Who ever sought that sudden calm, if I
Sought not? yet could not die!

Seek with thine eyes to pierce this crystal sphere:
Canst read a fate there, prosperous and clear?
Only the mists, only the weeping clouds,
Dimness and airy shrouds.

Beneath, what angels are at work? What powers
Prepare the secret of the fatal hours?
See! the mists tremble, and the clouds are stirred:
When comes the calling word?

The clouds are breaking from the crystal ball,
Breaking and clearing: and I look to fall.
When the cold winds and airs of portent sweep,
My spirit may have sleep.

O rich and sounding voices of the air!
Interpreters and prophets of despair:
Priests of a fearful sacrament! I come
To make with you mine home.

TO MORFYDD

A voice on the winds,
A voice by the waters,
Wanders and cries:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes!

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
Where the light lies:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes!

Cold, cold grow the winds,
And wild grow the waters,
Where the sun dies:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes!

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters,
The music flies:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Cold be the winds,
And wild be the waters,
So mine be your eyes!

BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS

Somber and rich, the skies,
Great glooms, and starry plains;
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me: and around
The saddest of all Kings,
Crown'd, and again discrown'd.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall.
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, no rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court: and yet,
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal King:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:
The stars, or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows, or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy,
Never was face so stern,
With sweet austerity.

Vanquish'd in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life and hapless? Nay:
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea:
And to the end of time.

Armor'd he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom;
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vex'd in the world's employ:
His soul was of the saints;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps,
When all the cries are still,
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

TO A TRAVELER

The mountains, and the lonely death at last
Upon the lonely mountains: O strong friend!
The wandering over, and the labor passed,
Thou art indeed at rest:
Earth gave thee of her best,
That labor and this end.

Earth was thy mother, and her true son thou:
Earth called thee to a knowledge of her ways,
Upon the great hills, up the great streams: now:
Upon earth's kindly breast
Thou art indeed at rest:
Thou, and thine arduous days.

Fare thee well, O strong heart! The tranquil night
Looks calmly on thee: and the sun pours down
His glory over thee, O heart of might!
Earth gives thee perfect rest:
Earth, whom thy swift feet pressed:
Earth, whom the vast stars crown.

THE PRECEPT OF SILENCE

I know you: solitary griefs,
Desolate passions, aching hours!
I know you: tremulous beliefs,
Agonized hopes, and ashen flowers!

The winds are sometimes sad to me;
The starry spaces, full of fear:
Mine is the sorrow on the sea,
And mine the sigh of places drear.

Some players upon plaintive strings
Publish their wistfulness abroad:
I have not spoken of these things,
Save to one man, and unto God.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

Born in 1868, Stephen Phillips is best known as the author of *Herod* (1900), *Paola and Francesca* (1899), and *Ulysses* (1902); a poetic playwright who succeeded in reviving, for a brief interval, the blank verse drama on the modern stage. Hailed at first with extravagant and incredible praise, likened to Milton and even Shakespeare, Phillips lived to see his most popular dramas discarded and his new ones, such as *Pietro of Siena* (1910), unproduced and unnoticed.

Phillips failed to "restore" poetic drama because he was, first of all, a lyric rather than a dramatic poet. In spite of certain moments of rhetorical splendor, his scenes are spectacular instead of genuinely emotional; his inspiration is too often derived and his highly colored passages bear the same relation to eloquence that paste coronets of the stage bear to crown jewels. As J. C. Squire remarked, reviewing a posthumous play, "Phillips tended to make all his characters minor poets, who were willing at any moment to hang up the play with unrevealing irrelevancies, faintly reminiscent of the great passages in great poets." Still, in his prime, Squire concedes, "with his remarkable gift of serious and unconscious parody, and his instinct for crude effects of situation, he was as near being a good dramatic poet as a man could be without actually being one."

From the late 1890s until about 1905, Phillips was in his heyday. The reversal was sudden and severe. By 1913, Phillips had lost his readers and his fortune. His ambitiously patriotic *Harold* was not published until 1927, twelve years after his death. Even the purple patches had faded to a foggy lavender.

As a lyrical poet, Phillips' reputation shrunk almost as much as his popularity as a dramatist. Yet, in spite of a too ornate, artificial diction, parts of *Marpessa* (1900) and *Lyrics and Dramas* (1913) achieve a ringing if mimetic eloquence.

Phillips died in 1915.

A DREAM

My dear love came to me, and said:
"God gives me one hour's rest
To spend with thee on earth again:
How shall we spend it best?"

"Why, as of old," I said; and so
We quarreled, as of old:
But, when I turned to make my peace,
That one short hour was told.

BEAUTIFUL LIE THE DEAD

Beautiful lie the dead;
Clear comes each feature;
Satisfied not to be,
Strangely contented.

Like ships, the anchor dropped,
Furled every sail is;
Mirrored with all their masts
In a deep water.

TO MILTON—BLIND

He who said suddenly, "Let there be light!"
To thee the dark deliberately gave;
That those full eyes might undistracted be
By this beguiling show of sky and field,
This brilliance, that so lures us from the Truth.
He gave thee back original night, His own
Tremendous canvas, large and blank and free,
Where at each thought a star flashed out and sang.
O blinded with a special lightning, thou
Hadst once again the virgin Dark! and when
The pleasant flowery sight, which had deterred
Thine eyes from seeing, when this recent world
Was quite withdrawn; then burst upon thy view
The elder glory; space again in pangs,
And Eden odorous in the early mist,
That heaving watery plain that *was* the world;

Then the burned earth, and Christ coming in clouds.
Or rather a special leave to thee was given
By the high power, and thou with bandaged eyes
Wast guided through the glimmering camp of God.
Thy hand was taken by angels, who patrol
The evening, or are sentries to the dawn,
Or pace the wide air everlastingly.
Thou wast admitted to the presence, and deep
Argument heardest, and the large design
That brings this world out of the woe to bliss.

LAURENCE BINYON

(Robert) Laurence Binyon was born at Lancaster, August 10, 1869, a cousin of Stephen Phillips, and was educated at Trinity College, Oxford. He won the Newdigate Prize in 1890, and, collaborating with Phillips, poems by both cousins appeared together the same year in *Primavera*. Binyon's subsequent volumes showed little distinction until he published *London Visions*, which, in an enlarged edition in 1908, revealed a gift of characterization and a turn of speech in surprising contrast to his previous academic *Lyrical Poems* (1894). His *Odes* (1901) contains his ripest work; two poems in particular, "The Threshold" and "The Bacchanal of Alexander," are glowing and unusually spontaneous.

Binyon's talent continued to grow; age gave his verse a new sharpness. Sixty poems were published in *The Secret* (1920), some of which embody all Binyon's dignity with a definiteness which he never before attained. *Selected Poems* (1924) is an excellently arranged sequence which includes Binyon's finest work with the exception of *The Sirens* (1927), the latter being a long, elaborate ode in which the slow-paced rhythms have wide scope.

Since 1893 Binyon has been head of the Department of Printed Books and Deputy Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. One volume of his Critical Studies—*English Poetry in its Relation to Painting and the Other Arts* (1919)—is especially rewarding to those interested in the kinship of the arts.

THE LITTLE DANCERS

Lonely, save for a few faint stars, the sky
Dreams; and lonely, below, the little street
Into its gloom retires, secluded and shy.
Scarcely the dumb roar enters this soft retreat;

And all is dark, save where come flooding rays
From a tavern window; there, to the brisk measure
Of an organ that down in an alley merrily plays,
Two children, all alone and no one by,
Holding their tattered frocks, thro' an airy maze
Of motion lightly threaded with nimble feet
Dance sedately; face to face they gaze,
Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure.

O WORLD, BE NOBLER

O world, be nobler, for her sake!
If she but knew thee what thou art,
What wrongs are borne, what deeds are done
In thee, beneath thy daily sun,
Know'st thou not that her tender heart
For pain and very shame would break?
O World, be nobler, for her sake!

THE HOUSE THAT WAS

Of the old house, only a few crumbled
Courses of brick, smothered in nettle and dock,
Or a squared stone, lying mossy where it tumbled.
Sprawling bramble and saucy thistle mock
What once was firelit floor and private charm
Whence, seen in a windowed picture, were hills fading
At dusk, and all was memory-colored and warm,
And voices talked, secure from the wind's invading.

Of the old garden, only a stray shining
Of daffodil flames amid April's cuckoo-flowers,
Or a cluster of aconite mixt with weeds entwining!
But, dark and lofty, a royal cedar towers
By homely thorns; and whether the white rain drifts
Or sun scorches, he holds the downs in ken,
The western vales; his branchy tiers he lifts,
Older than many a generation of men.

A SONG

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,
There is no measure upon earth.
Nay, they wither, root and stem,
If an end be set to them.

Overbrim and overflow,
If your own heart you would know;
For the spirit born to bless
Lives but in its own excess.

CHARLOTTE MEW

Charlotte (Mary) Mew was born in 1870, the daughter of an architect of distinction, who died when she was an infant. Little is generally known of her life except that it was a long struggle not only with poverty but with adversity and private sorrows that finally overcame her. In her late fifties, through the joint efforts of Hardy, De la Mare and Masefield, she was granted a Civil List pension. Though she loved the country, she was forced to live almost continually in London, becoming more and more of a recluse. One of her few excursions was a week-end at Max Gate, where she was the guest of Thomas Hardy who considered her the best woman poet of her day. The death of her mother was a blow from which she never recovered; the death of her sister hastened her end. As Sidney C. Cockerell wrote, "Charlotte and Anne Mew had more than a little in them of what made another Charlotte and Anne, and their sister Emily, what they were. They were indeed like two Brontë sisters reincarnate."

Charlotte Mew died March 24, 1928.

In the obituary note which Sidney Cockerell wrote for the *London Times* few new facts came to light. It was learned that Charlotte Mew wrote much more than was suspected, but "how much she destroyed at house-movings and during periods of overwhelming depression, we shall never know. There can be no doubt that her fastidious self-criticism proved fatal to much work that was really good, and that the printed poems are far less than a tithe of what she composed. These first appeared in various periodicals. In 1916, seventeen of them were collected into a thin volume which was issued by the Poetry Book Shop for a shilling. In 1921 this volume, named *The Farmer's Bride*, after the opening poem, was re-issued with the addition of 11 new poems, 28 in all. Perhaps

not more than another 20 have seen the light. But, although the visible output was so small, the quality was in each case poignant and arresting. These poems are written as though with the life-blood of a noble and passionate heart."

One of Charlotte Mew's first discoverers was Alida Klemantaski (later Mrs. Harold Monro), who was not only responsible for the publication of *The Farmer's Bride* but for the printing of the posthumous poems to which she furnished a Memoir. The first book was brought out in America under the title of *Saturday Market* in 1921. Had Miss Mew printed nothing but the original booklet, it would have been sufficient to rank her among the most distinctive and intense of living poets. Hers is the distillation, the essence of emotion, rather than the stirring up of passion. Her most remarkable work is in dramatic projections and monologues (unfortunately too long to quote) like "The Changeling," with its fantastic pathos, and that powerful meditation, "Madeleine in Church." But lyrics as swift as "Sea Love," or as ageless as "Song," with its simple finality, or as hymn-like as "I Have Been Through the Gates" are equally sure of their place in English literature. They are, in common with all of Charlotte Mew's work, disturbing in their direct beauty; full of a speech that is noble and profound without ever becoming pompous. Apart from her other qualities (not the least of which is her control of an unusually long and extraordinarily flexible line) Miss Mew's work is a series of triumphs in condensation.

"To a Child in Death," a strangely premonitory poem, is one of those given by Charlotte Mew to the editor shortly before her death. *The Rambling Sailor* was published posthumously in 1929.

IN THE FIELDS

Lord, when I look at lovely things which pass,
  Under old trees the shadow of young leaves
Dancing to please the wind along the grass,
  Or the gold stillness of the August sun on the August sheaves;
Can I believe there is a heavenlier world than this?
  And if there is
Will the strange heart of any everlasting thing
  Bring me these dreams that take my breath away?
They come at evening with the home-flying rooks and the scent of hay,
  Over the fields. They come in Spring.

SEA LOVE

Tide be runnin' the great world over:
'Twas only last June month I mind that we
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover
So everlastin' as the sea.

Here's the same little fishes that sputter and swim,
Wi' the moon's old glim on the gray, wet sand;
An' him no more to me nor me to him
Than the wind goin' over my hand.

I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE GATES

His heart, to me, was a place of palaces and pinnacles and shining towers;
I saw it then as we see things in dreams,—I do not remember how long I slept;
I remember the trees, and the high, white walls, and how the sun was always on the towers;
The walls are standing today, and the gates: I have been through the gates, I have groped, I have crept
Back, back. There is dust in the streets, and blood; they are empty; darkness is over them;
His heart is a place with the lights gone out, forsaken by great winds and the heavenly rain, unclean and unswept,
Like the heart of the holy city, old, blind, beautiful Jerusalem,
Over which Christ wept.

TO A CHILD IN DEATH

You would have scoffed if we had told you yesterday
Love made us feel—or so it was with me—like some great bird
Trying to hold and shelter you in its strong wing;—
A gay little shadowy smile would have tossed us back such a solemn word,
And it was not for that you were listening
When so quietly you slipped away
With half the music of the world unheard.
What shall we do with this strange Summer, meant for you,—
Dear, if we see the Winter through
What shall be done with Spring—?

This, this is the victory of the grave; here is death's sting.
That it is not strong enough, our strongest wing.

But what of His who like a Father pitieth—?
His Son was also, once, a little thing,
The wistfulest child that ever drew breath,
Chased by a sword from Bethlehem and in the busy house at Nazareth
Playing with little rows of nails, watching the carpenter's hammer swing,
Long years before His hands and feet were tied
And by a hammer and the three great nails He died,
Of youth, of Spring,
Of sorrow, of loneliness, of victory the king,
Under the shadow of that wing.

SONG

Love, Love today, my dear,
Love is not always here;
Wise maids know how soon grows sere
The greenest leaf of Spring;
But no man knoweth
Whither it goeth
When the wind bloweth
So frail a thing.

Love, Love, my dear, today,
If the ship's in the bay,
If the bird has come your way
That sings on summer trees;
When his song faileth
And the ship saileth
No voice availeth
To call back these.

THE FARMER'S BRIDE

Three Summers since I chose a maid,
Too young maybe—but more's to do
At harvest-time than bide and woo.
When us was wed she turned afraid

Of love and me and all things human;
Like the shut of a winter's day.
Her smile went out, and 'twasn't a woman—
More like a little frightened fay.
One night, in the Fall, she runned away.

"Out 'mong the sheep, her be," they said,
'Should properly have been abed;
But sure enough she wasn't there
Lying awake with her wide brown stare.
So over seven-acre field and up-along across the down
We chased her, flying like a hare
Before our lanterns. To Church-Town
All in a shiver and a scare
We caught her, fetched her home at last
And turned the key upon her, fast.

She does the work about the house
As well as most, but like a mouse:
Happy enough to chat and play
With birds and rabbits and such as they,
So long as men-folk keep away.
"Not near, not near!" her eyes beseech
When one of us comes within reach.
The women say that beasts in stall
Look round like children at her call.
I've hardly heard her speak at all.

Shy as a leveret, swift as he,
Straight and slight as a young larch tree,
Sweet as the first wild violets, she
To her wild self. But what to me?

The short days shorten and the oaks are brown,
The blue smoke rises to the low gray sky,
One leaf in the still air falls slowly down,
A magpie's spotted feathers lie
On the black earth spread white with rime,
The berries redden up to Christmas-time.
What's Christmas-time without there be
Some other in the house than we!

She sleeps up in the attic there
Alone, poor maid. 'Tis but a stair
Betwixt us. Oh! my God! the down,
The soft young down of her, the brown,
The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair . . .

BESIDE THE BED

Some one has shut the shining eyes, straightened and folded
The wandering hands quietly covering the unquiet breast:
So, smoothed and silenced you lie, like a child, not again to be questioned or scolded:
But, for you, not one of us believes that this is rest.

Not so to close the windows down can cloud and deaden
The blue beyond: or to screen the wavering flame subdue its breath:
Why, if I lay my cheek to your cheek, your gray lips, like dawn, would quiver and redden,
Breaking into the old, odd smile at this fraud of death.

Because all night you have not turned to us or spoken
It is time for you to wake; your dreams were never very deep:
I, for one, have seen the thin bright, twisted threads of them dimmed suddenly and broken.
This is only a most piteous pretense of sleep!

FROM "MADELEINE IN CHURCH"

. . . . . .

How old was Mary out of whom you cast
So many devils? Was she young or perhaps for years
She had sat staring, with dry eyes, at this and that man going past
Till suddenly she saw You on the steps of Simon's house
And stood and looked at You through tears.
I think she must have known by those
The thing, for what it was that had come to her.
For some of us there is a passion, I suppose
So far from earthly cares and earthly fears
That in its stillness you can hardly stir

Or in its nearness lift your hand,
So great that you have simply got to stand
Looking at it through tears, through tears.
Then straight from these there broke the kiss,
I think You must have known by this
The thing, for what it was that had come to You:
She did not love You like the rest,
It was in her own way, but at the worst, the best,
She gave you something altogether new.
And through it all, from her, no word,
She scarcely saw You, scarcely heard:
Surely You knew when she so touched You with her hair,
Or by the wet cheek lying there,
And while her perfume clung to You from head to feet all through the day
That You can change the things for which we care,
But even You, unless You kill us, not the way.

This then was peace for her, but passion too.
I wonder was it like a kiss that once I knew,
The only one that I would care to take
Into the grave with me, to which if there were afterwards, to wake
Almost as happy as the carven dead
In some dim chancel lying head to head
We slept with it, but face to face, the whole night through—
One breath, one throbbing quietness, as if the thing behind our lips was endless life,
Lost, as I woke, to hear in the strange earthly dawn, his "Are you there?"
And lie still, listening to the wind outside, among the firs.

So Mary chose the dream of Him for what was left to her of night and day.
It is the only truth: it is the dream in us that neither life nor death nor any other thing can take away:
But if she had not touched Him in the doorway of the dream could she have cared so much?
She was a sinner, we are what we are: the spirit afterwards, but first, the touch.

And He has never shared with me my haunted house beneath the trees
Of Eden and Calvary, with its ghosts that have not any eyes for tears,
And the happier guests, who would not see, or if they did, remember these,
Though they lived here a thousand years.
Outside, too gravely looking at me, He seems to stand,
And looking at Him if my forgotten spirit came
Unwillingly back, what could it claim
Of those calm eyes, that quiet speech,
Breaking like a slow tide upon the beach,
The scarred, not quite human hand?—
Unwillingly back to the burden of old imaginings
When it has learned so long not to think, not to be,
Again, again it would speak as it has spoken to me of things
That I shall not see!

ALFRED DOUGLAS

Lord Alfred Douglas was born in 1870 and educated at Magdalen College, Oxford. He was the editor of *The Academy* from 1907 to 1910 and was at one time the intimate friend of Oscar Wilde. One of the minor poets of "the eighteen-nineties," several of his poems rise above affectation and the end-of-the-century decadence. *The City of the Soul* (1899) and *Sonnets* (1900) contain something more than graceful writing, the latter volume disclosing Douglas's gift of phrase-making and fidelity to form.

The friendship with Oscar Wilde brought contumely upon him socially and depreciation poetically. In 1929 a convincing defense was published, and his *Selected Poems* (reissued in a popular edition in 1926) proved him a far better poet than his more notorious friend. Overshadowed at first, it is evident that Douglas freed himself from specious glamor. "Perkin Warbeck" is a remarkable combination of ballad and dramatic lyric; "Night Coming Out of a Garden" is a memorable lyric; and several of the sonnets illustrate his individuality as well as his enviable command of the structure.

THE GREEN RIVER

I know a green grass path that leaves the field
And, like a running river, winds along
Into a leafy wood, where is no throng
Of birds at noon-day; and no soft throats yield
Their music to the moon. The place is sealed,
An unclaimed sovereignty of voiceless song,
And all the unravished silences belong
To some sweet singer lost or unrevealed.

So is my soul become a silent place. . . .
Oh, may I wake from this uneasy night
To find some voice of music manifold.
Let it be shape of sorrow with wan face,
Or love that swoons on sleep, or else delight
That is as wide-eyed as a marigold.

FROM "THE CITY OF THE SOUL"

Each new hour's passage is the acolyte
Of inarticulate song and syllable,
And every passing moment is a bell,
To mourn the death of undiscerned delight.
Where is the sun that made the noon-day bright,
And where the midnight moon? O let us tell,
In long carved line and painted parable,
How the white road curves down into the night.

Only to build one crystal barrier
Against this sea which beats upon our days;
To ransom one lost moment with a rhyme.
Or if fate cries and grudging gods demur,
To clutch Life's hair, and thrust one maked phrase
Like a lean knife between the ribs of Time.

NIGHT COMING OUT OF A GARDEN

Through the still air of night
Suddenly comes, alone and shrill,
Like the far-off voice of the distant light,
The single piping trill

Of a bird that has caught the scent of the dawn,
And knows that the night is over;
(She has poured her dews on the velvet lawn
And drenched the long grass and the clover),
And now with her naked white feet
She is silently passing away,
Out of the garden and into the street,
Over the long yellow fields of the wheat,
Till she melts in the arms of the day.
And from the great gates of the East,
With a clang and a brazen blare,
Forth from the rosy wine and the feast
Comes the god with flame-flaked hair;
The hoofs of his horses ring
On the golden stones, and the wheels
Of his chariot burn and sing,
And the earth beneath him reels;
And forth with a rush and a rout
His myriad angels run,
And the world is awake with a shout,
"He is coming! The sun! The sun!"

THE DEAD POET

I dreamed of him last night, I saw his face
All radiant and unshadowed of distress,
And as of old, in music measureless,
I heard his golden voice and marked him trace
Under the common thing the hidden grace,
And conjure wonder out of emptiness,
Till mean things put on beauty like a dress
And all the world was an enchanted place.

And then methought outside a fast-locked gate
I mourned the loss of unrecorded words,
Forgotten tales and mysteries half said,
Wonders that might have been articulate,
And voiceless thoughts like murdered singing birds.
And so I woke and knew that he was dead.

SONNET ON THE SONNET

To see the moment holds a madrigal,
To find some cloistered place, some hermitage
For free devices, some deliberate cage
Wherein to keep wild thoughts like birds in thrall,
To eat sweet honey and to taste black gall,
To fight with form, to wrestle and to rage,
Till at the last upon the conquered page
The shadows of created Beauty fall—

This is the sonnet, this is all delight
Of every flower that blows in every Spring,
And all desire of every desert place,
This is the joy that fills a cloudy night
When, bursting from her misty following,
A perfect moon wins to an empty space.

T. STURGE MOORE

T(homas) Sturge Moore was born at Hastings, March 4, 1870. He is well known not only as an author, but as a critic, wood-engraver, and designer of book-plates. As an artist, he has achieved no little distinction and has designed the covers for the poetry of W. B. Yeats and others. As a poet, the greater portion of his verse is severely classical in tone, academic in expression but, of its kind, distinctive and intimate. Among his many volumes, the most outstanding are *The Vinedresser and Other Poems* (1899), *A Sicilian Idyll* (1911) and *The Sea Is Kind* (1914). *Danaë*, a volume of later poems, was published in 1920. After that date, Moore devoted himself to plays and dialogues: *The Tragic Mothers* (1921), *The Powers of the Air* (1921) and *Judas* (1923).

As critic, Sturge Moore has written works on Correggio, Dürer, Blake and other artists, his prose being as delicately balanced as his verse.

SILENCE SINGS

So faint, no ear is sure it hears,
So faint and far;
So vast that very near appears
My voice, both here and in each star

Unmeasured leagues do bridge between;
Like that which on a face is seen
Where secrets are;
Sweeping, like veils of lofty balm,
Tresses unbound
O'er desert sand, o'er ocean calm,
I am wherever is not sound;
And, goddess of the truthful face,
My beauty doth instill its grace
That joy abound.

A DUET

"Flowers nodding gayly, scent in air,
Flowers posied, flowers for the hair,
Sleepy flowers, flowers bold to stare—"
"O pick me some!"

"Shells with lip, or tooth, or bleeding gum,
Tell-tale shells, and shells that whisper *Come*,
Shells that stammer, blush, and yet are dumb—"
"O let me hear."

"Eyes so black they draw one trembling near,
Brown eyes, caverns flooded with a tear,
Cloudless eyes, blue eyes so windy clear—"
"O look at me!"

"Kisses sadly blown across the sea,
Darkling kisses, kisses fair and free,
Bob-a-cherry kisses 'neath a tree—"
"O give me one!"

Thus sang a king and queen in Babylon.

THE DYING SWAN

O silver-throated Swan,
Struck, struck! A golden dart
Clean through thy breast has gone
Home to thy heart.

Thrill, thrill, O silver throat!
O silver trumpet, pour
Love for defiance back
On him who smote!
And brim, brim o'er
With love; and ruby-dye thy track
Down thy last living reach
Of river, sail the golden light—
Enter the sun's heart—even teach,
O wondrous-gifted Pain, teach Thou
The God of love, let him learn how!

HILAIRE BELLOC

(Joseph) Hilaire (Pierre) Belloc, who has been described as "a Frenchman, an Englishman, an Oxford man, a country gentleman, a soldier, a satirist, a democrat, a novelist, and a practical journalist," was born near Paris, July 27, 1870. After leaving school he served as a driver in the 8th Regiment of French Artillery at Toul Meurthe-et-Moselle, being at that time a French citizen. He was naturalized as a British subject somewhat later, finished his education at Balliol College, Oxford, and in 1906 entered the House of Commons as Liberal Member for South Salford. He was a member of Parliament from 1906 to 1910.

Besides his other multifarious activities, he was the author (by 1929) of some forty-four volumes. These books range the gamut of literature: from travel-sketches to essays significantly entitled *On Nothing and Kindred Subjects* (1908), *On Everything* (1909), *On Anything* (1910) and simply *On* (1923); from *A Book of Beasts* (1896) to a *History of England*, three volumes of which were published by 1927. He has written several satirical fictions, one of which, *Mr. Clutterbuck's Election* (1908), exposes British underground politics, and which, together with his other work, bristles with what might be termed affable Bellocosity.

Belloc's *Path to Rome* (1902) is a high-spirited travel book which has passed through many editions. His historical studies and biographies of *Robespierre* and *Marie Antoinette* (1909) are classics of their kind. His nonsense-rhymes (*Cautionary Tales, More Beasts for Worse Children*) are comparable to Edward Lear's. As a serious poet, he is somewhat less engaging. His *Verses* (1910) is a rather brief collection of poems on a variety of themes. Although his humorous and burlesque stanzas are refreshing, Belloc is most himself when he writes either of malt liquor or his

beloved Sussex. His religious poems are full of a fine romanticism; "The South Country" and the "Lines to a Don" in defense of his friend Chesterton are the most persuasive of his earnest poems. His poetic as well as spiritual kinship with that other protagonist of a burly Catholicism, G. K. Chesterton, is obvious.

As an agile maker of epigrams, he has few equals, a fact proved by the inclusion of most of his rhymed *bons mots* in Belloc's *Collected Poems* in 1923.

THE SOUTH COUNTRY

When I am living in the Midlands
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening:
My work is left behind;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea;
And it's there walking in the high woods
That I could wish to be,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England
I saw them for a day:
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,
Their skies are fast and gray;
From their castle-walls a man may see
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England
They see the Severn strong,
A-rolling on rough water brown
Light aspen leaves along.
They have the secret of the rocks,
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country
Are the kindest and most wise,
They get their laughter from the loud surf,
And the faith in their happy eyes

Comes surely from our Sister the Spring
When over the sea she flies;
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines
But I smell the Sussex air;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there.
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,
Nor a broken thing mend:
And I fear I shall be all alone
When I get towards the end.
Who will there be to comfort me
Or who will be my friend?

I will gather and carefully make my friends
Of the men of the Sussex Weald;
They watch the stars from silent folds,
They stiffly plow the field.
By them and the God of the South Country
My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

HA'NACKER MILL

Sally is gone that was so kindly,
  Sally is gone from Ha'nacker Hill.
And the Briar grows ever since then so blindly
  And ever since then the clapper is still,
  And the sweeps have fallen from Ha'nacker Mill.

Ha'nacker Hill is in Desolation:
  Ruin a-top and a field unplowed,
And Spirits that call on a fallen nation,
  Spirits that loved her calling aloud:
  Spirits abroad in a windy cloud.

Spirits that call and no one answers;
  Ha'nacker's down and England's done.
Wind and Thistle for pipe and dancers
  And never a plowman under the Sun.
  Never a plowman. Never a one.

FOUR BEASTS

THE BIG BABOON

The Big Baboon is found upon
  The plains of Cariboo;
He goes about with nothing on
  (A shocking thing to do.)
But if he dressed respectably
  And let his whiskers grow
How like this Big Baboon would be
  To Mister So-and-So!

THE YAK

As a friend to the children commend me the Yak
  You will find it exactly the thing:
It will carry and fetch, you can ride on its back,
  Or lead it about with a string.
The Tartar who dwells on the plains of Thibet
  (A desolate region of snow)
Has for centuries made it a nursery pet,
  And surely the Tartar should know!

Then tell your papa where the Yak can be got,
And if he is awfully rich
He will buy you the creature—or else he will not.
(I cannot be positive which.)

THE LION

The Lion, the Lion, he dwells in the waste,
He has a big head and a very small waist;
But his shoulders are stark, and his jaws they are grim,
And a good little child will not play with him.

THE TIGER

The Tiger on the other hand, is kittenish and mild,
He makes a pretty playfellow for any little child;
And mothers of large families (who claim to common sense)
Will find a Tiger well repays the trouble and expense.

LINES TO A DON

Remote and ineffectual Don
That dared attack my Chesterton,
With that poor weapon, half-impelled,
Unlearnt, unsteady, hardly held,
Unworthy for a tilt with men—
Your quavering and corroded pen;
Don poor at Bed and worse at Table,
Don pinched, Don starved, Don miserable;
Don stuttering, Don with roving eyes,
Don nervous, Don of crudities;
Don clerical, Don ordinary,
Don self-absorbed and solitary;
Don here-and-there, Don epileptic;
Don puffed and empty, Don dyspeptic;
Don middle-class, Don sycophantic,
Don dull, Don brutish, Don pedantic;
Don hypocritical, Don bad,
Don furtive, Don three-quarters mad;
Don (since a man must make an end),
Don that shall never be my friend.

. . . . .

Don different from those regal Dons!
With hearts of gold and lungs of bronze,
Who shout and bang and roar and bawl
The Absolute across the hall,
Or sail in amply bellowing gown
Enormous through the Sacred Town,
Bearing from College to their homes
Deep cargoes of gigantic tomes;
Dons admirable! Dons of Might!
Uprising on my inward sight
Compact of ancient tales, and port
And sleep—and learning of a sort.
Dons English, worthy of the land;
Dons rooted; Dons that understand.
Good Dons perpetual that remain
A landmark, walling in the plain—
The horizon of my memories—
Like large and comfortable trees.

. . . . .

Don very much apart from these,
Thou scapegoat Don, thou Don devoted,
Don to thine own damnation quoted,
Perplexed to find thy trivial name
Reared in my verse to lasting shame.
Don dreadful, rasping Don and wearing,
Repulsive Don—Don past all bearing,
Don of the cold and doubtful breath,
Don despicable, Don of death;
Don nasty, skimpy, silent, level;
Don evil; Don that serves the devil.
Don ugly—that makes fifty lines.
There is a Canon which confines
A Rhymed Octosyllabic Curse
If written in Iambic Verse
To fifty lines. I never cut;
I far prefer to end it—but
Believe me I shall soon return.
My fires are banked, but still they burn
To write some more about the Don
That dared attack my Chesterton.

SONNET

We will not whisper, we have found the place
Of silence and the endless halls of sleep.
Of that which breathes alone throughout the deep
The end and the beginning; and the face
Between the level brows of whose blind eyes
Lie plenary contentment, full surcease
Of violence, and the passionless long peace
Wherein we lose our human lullabies.

Look up and tell the immeasurable height
Between the vault of the world and your dear head;
That's death, my little sister, and the night
Which was our Mother beckons us to bed,
Where large oblivion in her house is laid
For us tired children, now our games are played.

SIX EPIGRAMS

On Lady Poltagrue, a Public Peril

The Devil, having nothing else to do,
Went off to tempt My Lady Poltagrue.
My Lady, tempted by a private whim,
To his extreme annoyance, tempted him.

On a Dead Hostess

Of this bad world the loveliest and the best
Has smiled and said "Good Night," and gone to rest.

On Hygiene

Of old when folk lay sick and sorely tried,
The doctors gave them physic, and they died.
But here's a happier age: for now we know
Both how to make men sick and keep them so.

On His Books

When I am dead, I hope it may be said:
"His sins were scarlet, but his books were read."

Epitaph on the Politician

Here, richly, with ridiculous display,
The Politician's corpse was laid away.
While all of his acquaintance sneered and slanged,
I wept: for I had longed to see him hanged.

For False Heart

I said to Heart, "How goes it?" Heart replied:
"Right as a Ribstone Pippin!" But it lied.

ANTHONY C. DEANE

Anthony C. Deane was born in 1870 and was the Seatonian prizeman in 1905 at Clare College, Cambridge. He has been Vicar of All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, since 1916. His long list of light verse and essays includes several excellent parodies, the most delightful being found in his *New Rhymes for Old* (1901), a volume undeservedly neglected. Although it is not specifically stated, one suspects "The Ballad of the *Billycock*" of being a parody if not a burlesque of such nautical (and patriotic) ballads as Newbolt's.

THE BALLAD OF THE *BILLYCOCK*

It was the good ship *Billycock*, with thirteen men aboard,
Athirst to grapple with their country's foes,—
A crew, 'twill be admitted, not numerically fitted
To navigate a battleship in prose.

It was the good ship *Billycock* put out from Plymouth Sound,
While lustily the gallant heroes cheered,
And all the air was ringing with the merry bo'sun's singing,
Till in the gloom of night she disappeared.

But when the morning broke on her, behold, a dozen ships,
A dozen ships of France around her lay
(Or, if that isn't plenty, I will gladly make it twenty),
And hemmed her close in Salamander Bay.

Then to the Lord High Admiral there spake a cabin-boy:
"Methinks," he said, "the odds are somewhat great,
And, in the present crisis, a cabin-boy's advice is
That you and France had better arbitrate!"

"Pooh!" said the Lord High Admiral, and slapped his manly chest,
"Pooh! That would be both cowardly and wrong;
Shall I, a gallant fighter, give the needy ballad-writer
No suitable material for song?"

"Nay—is the shorthand-writer here?—I tell you, one and all,
I mean to do my duty, as I ought;
With eager satisfaction let us clear the decks for action
And fight the craven Frenchmen!" So they fought.

And (after several stanzas which as yet are incomplete,
Describing all the fight in epic style)
When the *Billycock* was going, she'd a dozen prizes towing
(Or twenty, as above) in single file!

Ah, long in glowing English hearts the story will remain,
The memory of that historic day,
And, while we rule the ocean, we will picture with emotion
The *Billycock* in Salamander Bay!

P.S.—I've lately noticed that the critics—who, I think,
In praising *my* productions are remiss—
Quite easily are captured, and profess themselves enraptured,
By patriotic ditties such as this,

For making which you merely take some dauntless Englishmen,
Guns, heroism, slaughter, and a fleet—
Ingredients you mingle in a meter with a jingle,
And there you have your masterpiece complete!

Why, then, with labor infinite, produce a book of verse
To languish on the "All for Twopence" shelf?
The ballad bold and breezy comes particularly easy—
I mean to take to writing it myself!

According to his own biography, William Henry Davies was born in a public-house called Church House at Newport, in the County of Monmouthshire, April 20, 1870, of Welsh parents. He was, until Bernard Shaw "discovered" him, a cattleman, a berry-picker, a panhandler—in short, a vagabond. In a preface to Davies' *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1906), Shaw describes how the manuscript came into his hands:

"In the year 1905 I received by post a volume of poems by one William H. Davies, whose address was The Farm House, Kennington, S.E. I was surprised to learn that there was still a farmhouse left in Kennington; for I did not then suspect that The Farm House, like the Shepherdess Walks and Nightingale Lane and Whetstone Parks of Bethnal Green and Holborn, is so called nowadays in irony, and is, in fact, a doss-house, or hostelry, where single men can have a night's lodging, for, at most, sixpence. . . . The author, as far as I could guess, had walked into a printer's or stationer's shop; handed in his manuscript; and ordered his book as he might have ordered a pair of boots. It was marked 'price, half a crown.' An accompanying letter asked me very civilly if I required a half-crown book of verses; and if so, would I please send the author the half-crown: if not, would I return the book. This was attractively simple and sensible. I opened the book, and was more puzzled than ever; for before I had read three lines I perceived that the author was a real poet. His work was not in the least strenuous or modern; there was indeed no sign of his ever having read anything otherwise than as a child reads. . . . Here, I saw, was a genuine innocent, writing odds and ends of verse about odds and ends of things; living quite out of the world in which such things are usually done, and knowing no better (or rather no worse) than to get his book made by the appropriate craftsman and hawk it round like any other ware."

It is more than likely that Davies' first notoriety as a tramp-poet who had ridden the rails in the United States and had had his right foot cut off by a train in Canada, obscured his merit as a singer. Even his early *The Soul's Destroyer* (1907) revealed that simplicity which is as *naïf* as it is unexpected.

Between 1906, when Davies published his first book, and 1930, the poet issued eighteen volumes, five of autobiography, thirteen of verse. Besides these, there were three different *Collected Poems*, appearing in 1916, 1923, and 1929. The difficulty of keeping track of this verse is the greater since the Welsh-English poet is still in the very flush of fecundity and his continuous output shows no sign of diminishing. *Collected Poems* (1929 edition) contains more than four hundred poems in which good, indifferent

and bad mingle so inextricably that the reader must accept Davies *en masse* or reject him *in toto*. One can no more imagine Davies self-critical than one can imagine him in the labor of creation, his "labor" being about as arduous as a bird's and his song being no less recreational.

The figure is not far-fetched, for no poetry has ever been more obviously bird-like. But, it may be asked with a proper regard for ornithology, what bird? Not the lark, for Davies is no Shelley hurling himself and his cry far above the comfortable altitudes of man. Not the nightingale, for his is not Keats' clear passion nor Swinburne's operatic coloratura. It is the English robin that Davies most resembles or the American goldfinch, whose song, limited in range, is cleanly, sharply pitched. Without the variability of greater singers, his notes are only three or four, but the tones are so cool, the delivery so fresh that we would not exchange the crisp spontaneity even for the versatile brilliance of the hermit-thrush. No less than thirty-three poems begin: "When I in praise of babies speak," "When on a summer morn I wake," "When I came forth this morn I saw," "When I . . ." "When I . . ." "When I . . ."

It is easy enough to deride such naïveté, easy enough to confuse Davies with his compatriots who pipe their placid week-end pastorals. But, although a Georgian in point of time, Davies shakes himself free of "Georgianism," that false simplicity sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thoughtlessness. He does not study his subjects from the outside; it is doubtful if he studies them at all; he is always within his bucolics. Thus his sympathies are as genuine as they are ingenuous. His sense of wonder is as direct, as unmistakable as an untutored child's. He looks at clouds, cowslips, lovely ladies, glow-worms, sheep, dogs, dolls and daisies, as though they had never existed prior to his observation; and he puts them to rhyme as unselfconsciously as though never before had they been employed in verse.

Observe the poem entitled "A Great Time" and note what details prompt his adjective. Beauty to Davies is not in the elaboration but in the mere being; greatness is, therefore, implicit in the coming together of a rainbow and a cuckoo. These are his auguries of innocence, for him, also, "a dog starv'd at his master's gate Predicts the ruin of the State." His rapport with lamb and bat and game-cock may lead us to imply a kinship with Blake, but he is, at the best, a Blake in words of one syllable. Where Blake projects apocalypses and flaming images, Davies offers a panorama of quiet pictures; we drop from passionate vision into pleasant reverie. And if the world is neither as simple nor spontaneous as his homely dream, Davies almost persuades us that it ought to be

DAYS TOO SHORT

When primroses are out in Spring,
  And small, blue violets come between;
  When merry birds sing on boughs green,
And rills, as soon as born, must sing;

When butterflies will make side-leaps,
  As though escaped from Nature's hand
  Ere perfect quite; and bees will stand
Upon their heads in fragrant deeps;

When small clouds are so silvery white
  Each seems a broken rimmèd moon—
  When such things are, this world too soon,
For me, doth wear the veil of Night.

THE MOON

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,
  O thou fair Moon, so close and bright;
Thy beauty makes me like the child
  That cries aloud to own thy light:
The little child that lifts each arm
To press thee to her bosom warm.

Though there are birds that sing this night
  With thy white beams across their throats,
Let my deep silence speak for me
  More than for them their sweetest notes:
Who worships thee till music fails
Is greater than thy nightingales.

THE VILLAIN

While joy gave clouds the light of stars,
  That beamed where'er they looked;
And calves and lambs had tottering knees,
  Excited, while they sucked;
While every bird enjoyed his song,
Without one thought of harm or wrong—

I turned my head and saw the wind,
Not far from where I stood,
Dragging the corn by her golden hair,
Into a dark and lonely wood.

THE EXAMPLE

Here's an example from
A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly,
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

THE TWO STARS

Day has her star, as well as Night,
One star is black, the other white.
I saw a white star burn and pant
And swirl with such a wildness, once—
That I stood still, and almost stared
Myself into a trance!

The star of Day, both seen and heard,
Is but a little, English bird:
The Lark, whose wings beat time to his
Wild rapture, sings, high overhead;
When silence comes, we almost fear
That Earth receives its dead.

THE DOG

The dog was there, outside her door,
She gave it food and drink,
She gave it shelter from the cold:

It was the night young Molly robbed
An old fool of his gold.

"Molly," I said, "you'll go to hell—"
And yet I half believed
That ugly, famished, tottering cur
Would bark outside the gates of Heaven,
To open them for Her!

JENNY WREN

Her sight is short, she comes quite near;
A foot to me's a mile to her;
And she is known as Jenny Wren,
The smallest bird in England. When
I heard that little bird at first,
Methought her frame would surely burst
With earnest song. Oft had I seen
Her running under leaves so green,
Or in the grass when fresh and wet,
As though her wings she would forget.
And, seeing this, I said to her—
"My pretty runner, you prefer
To be a thing to run unheard
Through leaves and grass, and not a bird!"
'Twas then she burst, to prove me wrong,
Into a sudden storm of song;
So very loud and earnest, I
Feared she would break her heart and die.
"Nay, nay," I laughed, "be you no thing
To run unheard, sweet scold, but sing!
O I could hear your voice near me,
Above the din in that oak tree,
When almost all the twigs on top
Had starlings chattering without stop."

AMBITION

I had Ambition, by which sin
The angels fell;
I climbed and, step by step, O Lord,
Ascended into Hell.

Returning now to peace and quiet,
And made more wise,
Let my descent and fall, O Lord,
Be into Paradise.

THE HERMIT

What moves that lonely man is not the boom
Of waves that break against the cliff so strong;
Nor roar of thunder, when that traveling voice
Is caught by rocks that carry far along.

'Tis not the groan of oak tree in its prime,
When lightning strikes its solid heart to dust.
Nor frozen pond when, melted by the sun,
It suddenly doth break its sparkling crust.

What moves that man is when the blind bat taps
His window where he sits alone at night;
Or when the small bird sounds like some great beast
Among the dead, dry leaves so frail and light;

Or when the moths on his night-pillow beat
Such heavy blows he fears they'll break his bones;
Or when a mouse inside the papered walls,
Comes like a tiger crunching through the stones.

WHEN YON FULL MOON

When yon full moon's with her white fleet of stars,
And but one bird makes music in the grove;
When you and I are breathing side by side,
Where our two bodies make one shadow, love;

Not for her beauty will I praise the moon,
But that she lights thy purer face and throat;
The only praise I'll give the nightingale
Is that she draws from thee a richer note.

For, blinded with thy beauty, I am filled,
Like Saul of Tarsus, with a greater light;
When he had heard that warning voice in Heaven,
And lost his eyes to find a deeper sight.

Come, let us sit in that deep silence then,
  Launched on love's rapids, with our passions proud,
That makes all music hollow—though the lark
  Raves in his windy heights above a cloud.

SHEEP

When I was once in Baltimore,
  A man came up to me and cried,
"Come, I have eighteen hundred sheep,
  And we will sail on Tuesday's tide.

"If you will sail with me, young man,
  I'll pay you fifty shillings down;
These eighteen hundred sheep I take
  From Baltimore to Glasgow town."

He paid me fifty shillings down,
  I sailed with eighteen hundred sheep;
We soon had cleared the harbor's mouth,
  We soon were in the salt sea deep.

The first night we were out at sea
  Those sheep were quiet in their mind;
The second night they cried with fear—
  They smelt no pastures in the wind.

They sniffed, poor things, for their green fields,
  They cried so loud I could not sleep;
For fifty thousand shillings down
  I would not sail again with sheep.

THE MIND'S LIBERTY

The mind, with its own eyes and ears,
  May for these others have no care;
No matter where this body is,
  The mind is free to go elsewhere.
My mind can be a sailor, when
  This body's still confined to land;
And turn these mortals into trees,
  That walk in Fleet Street or the Strand.

So, when I'm passing Charing Cross,
Where porters work both night and day,
I ofttimes hear sweet Malpas Brook,
That flows thrice fifty miles away.
And when I'm passing near St. Paul's,
I see, beyond the dome and crowd,
Twm Barlum, that green pap in Gwent,
With its dark nipple in a cloud.

A GREAT TIME

Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad,
Beyond the town, where wild flowers grow—
A rainbow and a cuckoo, Lord!
How rich and great the times are now!
Know, all ye sheep
And cows that keep
On staring that I stand so long
In grass that's wet from heavy rain—
A rainbow and a cuckoo's song
May never come together again;
May never come
This side the tomb.

THE ELEMENTS

No house of stone
Was built for me;
When the Sun shines—
I am a bee.

No sooner comes
The Rain so warm,
I come to light—
I am a worm.

When the Winds blow,
I do not strip,
But set my sails—
I am a ship.

When Lightning comes,
  It plays with me
And I with it—
  I am a tree.

When drowned men rise
  At Thunder's word,
Sings Nightingale—
  I am a bird.

LEAVES

Peace to these little broken leaves,
  That strew our common ground;
That chase their tails, like silly dogs,
  As they go round and round.

For though in winter boughs are bare,
  Let us not once forget
Their summer glory, when these leaves
  Caught the great Sun in their strong net;
And made him, in the lower air,
Tremble—no bigger than a star!

SONGS OF JOY

Sing out, my Soul, thy songs of joy;
  Such as a happy bird will sing
Beneath a Rainbow's lovely arch
  In early spring.

Think not of Death in thy young days;
  Why shouldst thou that grim tyrant fear,
And fear him not when thou art old,
  And he is near.

Strive not for gold, for greedy fools
  Measure themselves by poor men never;
Their standards still being richer men,
  Makes them poor ever.

Train up thy mind to feel content,
  What matters then how low thy store!
What we enjoy, and not possess,
  Makes rich or poor.

Filled with sweet thought, then happy I
  Take not my state from others' eyes;
What's in my mind—not on my flesh
  Or theirs—I prize.

Sing, happy Soul, thy songs of joy;
  Such as a Brook sings in the wood,
That all night had been strengthened by
  Heaven's purer flood.

TO A LADY FRIEND

Since you have turned unkind,
  Then let the truth be known:
We poets give our praise
  To any weed or stone,
Or sulking bird that in
  The cold, sharp wind is dumb;
To this, or that, or you—
  Whatever's first to come.

You came my way the first,
  When the life-force in my blood—
Coming from none knows where—
  Had reached its highest flood;
A time when anything,
  No matter old or new,
Could bring my song to birth—
  Sticks, bones, or rags, or you!

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

J. M. SYNGE

John M. Synge, the most brilliant star of the Celtic revival, was born at Rathfarnham, near Dublin, in 1871, his maternal grandfather, Robert Traill, being famous for a splendid translation of Josephus. As a child in Wicklow, Synge was already fascinated by the strange idioms and rhythmic speech he heard there, a native utterance which was his greatest delight and which was rare material for his greatest work. He did not use this folk-language merely as he heard it. He was an artist first, and, as an artist, he bent and shaped the rough matter, selecting with great fastidiousness, so that in his plays every speech is, as he himself declared all good speech should be, "as fully flavored as a nut or apple." Even in *The Tinker's Wedding* (1907), the least important of his plays, Synge's peculiarly inflected sentences vivify every scene; one is arrested by snatches of illuminated prose like:

> "That's a sweet tongue you have, Sarah Casey; but if sleep's a grand thing, it's a grand thing to be waking up a day the like of this, when there's a warm sun in it, and a kind of air, and you'll hear the cuckoos singing and crying out on the top of the hill."

For some time, Synge's career was uncertain. He went to Germany half intending to become a professional musician. There he studied the theory of music, perfecting himself meanwhile in Gaelic and Hebrew, winning prizes in both of these languages. He took up Heine with great interest, familiarized himself with the peasant-dramas of Anzengruber, and was planning to translate the

ballads of the old German minnesingers into Anglo-Irish dialect. Then he went to Paris.

Yeats found him in France in 1898 and advised him to go to the Aran Islands, to live there as if he were one of the people. "Express a life," said Yeats, "that has never found expression." Synge went. He became part of the life of Aran, living upon salt fish and eggs, talking Irish for the most part, but listening also to that beautiful English which, to quote Yeats again, "has grown up in Irish-speaking districts and takes its vocabulary from the time of Malory and of the translators of the Bible, but its idiom and vivid metaphor from Irish." The result of this close contact was five of the greatest poetic prose dramas not only of Synge's own generation, but of several generations preceding it. (See Preface.)

In *Riders to the Sea* (1903), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), there is a richness of imagery, a new language startling in its vigor; a wildness and passion that contrast strangely with the suave mysticism and delicate spirituality of the playwright's associates in the Irish Theatre.

Synge's *Poems and Translations* (1910), a volume which was not issued until after his death, contains not only his few hard and earthy verses, but also Synge's famous preface embodying his theory of poetry. The translations, which have been rendered in a highly intensified prose, are as racy as anything in his plays; his versions of Villon and Petrarch are remarkable for their adherence to the original though they radiate the adapter's own personality.

Synge died, just as his reputation had broken down borders, at a private hospital in Dublin, March 24, 1909.

PRELUDE

Still south I went and west and south again,
Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And, far from cities and the sights of men,
Lived with the sunshine and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
The gray and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
In converse with the mountains, moors and fens.

BEG-INNISH

Bring Kateen-beug and Maurya Jude
To dance in Beg-Innish,[1]
And when the lads (they're in Dunquin)
Have sold their crabs and fish,
Wave fawny shawls and call them in,
And call the little girls who spin,
And seven weavers from Dunquin,
To dance in Beg-Innish.

I'll play you jigs, and Maurice Kean,
Where nets are laid to dry,
I've silken strings would draw a dance
From girls are lame or shy;
Four strings I've brought from Spain and France
To make your long men skip and prance,
Till stars look out to see the dance
Where nets are laid to dry.

We'll have no priest or peeler in
To dance in Beg-Innish;
But we'll have drink from M'riarty Jim
Rowed round while gannets fish,
A keg with porter to the brim,
That every lad may have his whim,
Till we up sails with M'riarty Jim
And sail from Beg-Innish.

IN KERRY

We heard the thrushes by the shore and sea,
And saw the golden stars' nativity,
Then round we went the lane by Thomas Flynn,
Across the church where bones lie out and in;
And there I asked beneath a lonely cloud
Of strange delight, with one bird singing loud,
What change you'd wrought in graveyard, rock and sea,
To wake this new wild paradise for me. . . .
Yet knew no more than knew those merry sins
Had built this stack of thigh-bones, jaws and shins.

[1] The accent is on the last syllable.

A QUESTION

I asked if I got sick and died, would you
With my black funeral go walking too,
If you'd stand close to hear them talk or pray
While I'm let down in that steep bank of clay.

And, No, you said, for if you saw a crew
Of living idiots pressing round that new
Oak coffin—they alive, I dead beneath
That board—you'd rave and rend them with your teeth.

ON AN ISLAND

You've plucked a curlew, drawn a hen,
Washed the shirts of seven men,
You've stuffed my pillow, stretched the sheet,
And filled the pan to wash your feet,
You've cooped the pullets, wound the clock,
And rinsed the young men's drinking crock;
And now we'll dance to jigs and reels,
Nailed boots chasing girls' naked heels,
Until your father'll start to snore,
And Jude, now you're married, will stretch on the floor.

DREAD

Beside a chapel I'd a room looked down,
Where all the women from the farms and town,
On Holy-days and Sundays used to pass
To marriages, and christenings, and to Mass.

Then I sat lonely watching score and score,
Till I turned jealous of the Lord next door. . . .
Now by this window, where there's none can see,
The Lord God's jealous of yourself and me.

IN MAY

In a nook
That opened south,
You and I
Lay mouth to mouth.

A snowy gull
And sooty daw
Came and looked
With many a caw;

"Such," I said,
"Are I and you,
When you've kissed me
Black and blue!"

A TRANSLATION FROM PETRARCH

(*He is Jealous of the Heavens and the Earth*)

What a grudge I am bearing the earth that has its arms about her, and is holding that face away from me, where I was finding peace from great sadness.

What a grudge I am bearing the Heavens that are after taking her, and shutting her in with greediness, the Heavens that do push their bolt against so many.

What a grudge I am bearing the blessed saints that have got her sweet company, that I am always seeking; and what a grudge I am bearing against Death, that is standing in her two eyes, and will not call me with a word.

TO THE OAKS OF GLENCREE

My arms are round you, and I lean
Against you, while the lark
Sings over us, and golden lights and green
Shadows are on your bark.

There'll come a season when you'll stretch
Black boards to cover me;
Then in Mount Jerome I will lie, poor wretch,
With worms eternally.

Nora Hopper was born in Exeter, England, on January 2, 1871 and married W. H. Chesson, a well-known writer, in 1901. Although the Irish element in her work is acquired and incidental there is a distinct if fitful race consciousness in *Ballads in Prose* (1894) and *Under Quickened Boughs* (1896). She died suddenly April 14, 1906.

A CONNAUGHT LAMENT

I will arise and go hence to the west,
And dig me a grave where the hill-winds call;
But O were I dead, were I dust, the fall
Of my own love's footstep would break my rest!

My heart in my bosom is black as a sloe!
I heed not cuckoo, nor wren, nor swallow:
Like a flying leaf in the sky's blue hollow
The heart in my breast is, that beats so low.

Because of the words your lips have spoken,
(O dear black head that I must not follow)
My heart is a grave that is stripped and hollow,
As ice on the water my heart is broken.

O lips forgetful and kindness fickle,
The swallow goes south with you: I go west
Where fields are empty and scythes at rest.
I am the poppy and you the sickle;
My heart is broken within my breast.

EVA GORE-BOOTH

Eva Gore-Booth, the second daughter of Sir Henry Gore-Booth and the sister of Countess Marcievicz, was born in Sligo, Ireland in 1871. She first appeared in "Æ"'s anthology, *New Songs*, in which so many of the modern Irish poets first came forward.

Her initial volume, *Poems* (1898), showed practically no distinction—not even the customary "promise." But *The One and the Many* (1904), *The Sorrowful Princess* (1907) and the later *The Sword of Justice* (1918) reveal the gift of the Celtic singer who is half mystic, half minstrel. Primarily philosophic, her verse often turns to lyrics as insistent as the two examples here reprinted.

THE WAVES OF BREFFNY

The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic on it and many a horse and cart
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it; and terror on the wind:
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal;
But the little waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the little waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

WALLS

Free to all souls the hidden beauty calls,
The sea thrift dwelling on her spray-swept height,
The lofty rose, the low-grown aconite,
The gliding river and the stream that brawls
Down the sharp cliffs with constant breaks and falls—
All these are equal in the equal light—
All waters mirror the one Infinite.

God made a garden; it was men built walls.
But the wide sea from men is wholly freed;
Freely the great waves rise and storm and break,
Nor softlier go for any landlord's need,
Where rhythmic tides flow for no miser's sake
And none hath profit of the brown sea-weed,
But all things give themselves, yet none may take.

Moira O'Neill, a writer who has shunned public scrutiny, is known chiefly by a remarkable little collection of only twenty-five lyrics, *Songs of the Glens of Antrim* (1900), simple tunes as unaffected as the peasants of whom she sings. A second volume, *More Songs of the Glens of Antrim*, was published in 1921. The best of her poetry is dramatic without being theatrical; melodious without falling into the tinkle of most "popular" sentimental verse.

A BROKEN SONG

"*Where am I from?*" From the green hills of Erin.
"*Have I no song then?*" My songs are all sung.
"*What o' my love?*" 'Tis alone I am farin'.
Old grows my heart, an' my voice yet is young.

"*If she was tall?*" Like a king's own daughter.
"*If she was fair?*" Like a mornin' o' May.
When she'd come laughin' 'twas the running wather,
When she'd come blushin' 'twas the break o' day.

"*Where did she dwell?*" Where one'st I had my dwellin'.
"*Who loved her best?*" There's no one now will know.
"*Where is she gone?*" Och, why would I be tellin'!
Where she is gone there I can never go.

BEAUTY'S A FLOWER

Youth's for an hour,
Beauty's a flower,
But love is the jewel that wins the world.

Youth's for an hour, an' the taste o' life is sweet,
Ailes was a girl that stepped on two bare feet;
In all my days I never seen the one as fair as she,
I'd have lost my life for Ailes, an' she never cared for me.

Beauty's a flower, an' the days o' life are long,
There's little knowin' who may live to sing another song;
For Ailes was the fairest, but another is my wife,
An' Mary—God be good to her!—is all I love in life.

Youth's for an hour,
Beauty's a flower,
But love is the jewel that wins the world.

THE FAIRY LOUGH[1]

Loughareema! Loughareema
  Lies so high among the heather;
A little lough, a dark lough,
  The wather's black and deep.
Ould herons go a-fishin' there,
  An' seagulls all together
Float roun' the one green island
  On the fairy lough asleep.

Loughareema! Loughareema!
  When the sun goes down at seven,
When the hills are dark an' *airy*,
  'Tis a curlew whistles sweet!
Then somethin' rustles all the reeds
  That stand so thick and even;
A little wave runs up the shore
  An' fleet as if on feet.

Loughareema! Loughareema!
  Stars come out an' stars are hidin';
The wather whispers on the stones,
  The flittherin' moths are free.
One'st before the mornin' light
  The Horsemen will come ridin'
Roun' and roun' the fairy lough,
  An' no one there to see!

RALPH HODGSON

Ralph Hodgson was born in Yorkshire, in 1872. Though he has been most reticent regarding the facts of his life, separating the poet from the casual man by the intimation that "the poet should live in his poetry," this much has been gathered: He lived for a while in America; he worked as a pressman in Fleet Street; he was a professional draughtsman, being employed on the pictorial staff of an evening paper; he edited *Fry's Magazine;* he has bred bull terriers and, as a leading authority, has judged them, bull-terriers and pugilism being his private enthusiasms. In 1924,

[1] Lough = Loch or Lake.

Hodgson accepted an invitation to visit Japan as lecturer in English literature at Sendai University, about two hundred miles from Tokio. In 1928 the invitation was renewed and again accepted.

Although Hodgson has earned a livelihood in many capacities, he has kept his writing severely apart, refusing to stain his pen with hack-work of any sort. He has given only his highest moments to his art, believing with Housman that lyric poetry—and Hodgson is one of the purest lyric poets of his age—is not a casual recreation. Writing little and publishing less, Hodgson was unknown until he was thirty-six, his first book, *The Last Blackbird and Other Lines*, appearing in 1907. In 1913, he went into partnership with Lovat Fraser and Holbrook Jackson, publishing broadsides and chapbooks; many of his most famous poems appearing in the exquisite booklets issued by their press, "The Sign of Flying Fame." *Eve, The Bull, The Song of Honor, The Mystery and Other Poems* (1913-1914) found a wide circle of delighted readers in this format. A collected edition (entitled simply *Poems*) was published in 1917.

Hodgson's verses, full of the love of all natural things, a love that goes out to

> "an idle rainbow
> No less than laboring-seas,"

were originally brought out in the much-sought yellow wrappers with Lovat Fraser's charming decorations. His collected *Poems* appeared in America in 1918, receiving instant recognition.

One of the most graceful of word-magicians, Ralph Hodgson will retain his freshness as long as there are lovers of fresh and timeless songs. It is difficult to think of any anthology of contemporary English poetry that could omit "Eve," "The Bull," "The Song of Honor," and that memorable snatch of music, "Time, You Old Gypsy Man." One succumbs to the charm of "Eve" at the first reading; for here is the oldest of all legends told with a surprising simplicity and still more surprising difference. This Eve is neither the conscious sinner nor the symbolic Mother of men; she is, in Hodgson's candid lines, any young English country girl—filling her basket, regarding the world and the serpent itself with a frank and childlike wonder.

An outstanding feature of Hodgson's work is his sympathy with animal life. This wide humanitarianism is implicit in poems like "The Bull," but it is explicit in his outrage against the slaughter of birds for fine feathers ("Stupidity Street") and the irony of "The Bells of Heaven."

Influences are far to seek in this work, although one scents rather than sees a trace of Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" in "Eve" and Christopher Smart's "Song to David" in "The Song of

Honor." While Hodgson's poetry remains in the tradition, making no pretense to singularity or even originality, it has, because of an inherent candor, the spontaneity of a new genre.

REASON

Reason has moons, but moons not hers
Lie mirrored on her sea,
Confusing her astronomers,
But O! delighting me.

EVE

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees.
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curled round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall. . . .
Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and
Now was the moment or
Never at all.

"Eva!" Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
"Eva!" he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Soft as a bubble sung
Out of a linnet's lung,
Soft and most silverly
"Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite;
Eve, with her body white,

Supple and smooth to her
Slim finger tips;
Wondering, listening,
Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half-way to her lips.

Oh, had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came,
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass.

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low. . . .
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh, what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain. . . .
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill tonight—

"Eva!" the toast goes round,
"Eva!" again.

TIME, YOU OLD GYPSY MAN

Time, you old gypsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

All things I'll give you
Will you be my guest,
Bells for your jennet
Of silver the best,
Goldsmiths shall beat you
A great golden ring,
Peacocks shall bow to you,
Little boys sing,
Oh, and sweet girls will
Festoon you with may.
Time, you old gypsy,
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,
Last night in Rome,
Morning, and in the crush
Under Paul's dome;
Under Paul's dial
You tighten your rein—
Only a moment,
And off once again;
Off to some city
Now blind in the womb,
Off to another
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gypsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

THE BIRDCATCHER[1]

When flighting time is on, I go
With clap-net and decoy,
A-fowling after goldfinches
And other birds of joy;

I lurk among the thickets of
The Heart where they are bred,
And catch the twittering beauties as
They fly into my Head.

THE SONG OF HONOR

I climbed the hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep;
An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep;
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,
Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard the watchdog miles away
And bells of distant sheep.
I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done
Since beauty and the stars were one,
Though none so hard as I.

It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 723.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—
Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these?
The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssian vale
That season of the year!
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,
I heard them both again, again,
As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,
Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear!

I heard them both, and, oh! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men
And seas and rainbows vie!

I heard the universal choir,
The Sons of Light exalt their Sire
With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face,
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of being sound
From every well of honor found
In human sense and soul:
The song of poets when they write
The testament of Beautysprite

Upon a flying scroll,
The song of painters when they take
A burning brush for Beauty's sake
And limn her features whole—

The song of men divinely wise
Who look and see in starry skies
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,
And when these pale away
Hear flocks of shiny pleiades
Among the plums and apple trees
Sing in the summer day—

The song of all both high and low
To some blest vision true,
The song of beggars when they throw
The crust of pity all men owe
To hungry sparrows in the snow,
Old beggars hungry too—
The song of kings of kingdoms when
They rise above their fortune men,
And crown themselves anew—

The song of courage, heart and will
And gladness in a fight,
Of men who face a hopeless hill
With sparkling and delight,
The bells and bells of song that ring
Round banners of a cause or king
From armies bleeding white—

The song of sailors every one
When monstrous tide and tempest run
At ships like bulls at red,
When stately ships are twirled and spun
Like whipping tops and help there's none
And mighty ships ten thousand ton
Go down like lumps of lead—

And song of fighters stern as they
At odds with fortune night and day,
Crammed up in cities grim and gray

As thick as bees in hives,
Hosannas of a lowly throng
Who sing unconscious of their song,
Whose lips are in their lives—

And song of some at holy war
With spells and ghouls more dread by far
Than deadly seas and cities are,
Or hordes of quarreling kings—
The song of fighters great and small
The song of petty fighters all
And high heroic things—

The song of lovers—who knows how
Twitched up from place and time
Upon a sigh, a blush, a vow,
A curve or hue of cheek or brow,
Borne up and off from here and now
Into the void sublime!

And crying loves and passions still
In every key from soft to shrill
And numbers never done,
Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,
And loves like Ruth's of old no end,
And intermissions none—

And burst on burst for beauty and
For numbers not behind,
From men whose love of motherland
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,
Sole, selfless, boundless, blind—
And song of some with hearts beside
For men and sorrows far and wide,
Who watch the world with pity and pride
And warm to all mankind—

And endless joyous music rise
From children at their play,
And endless soaring lullabies
From happy, happy mothers' eyes,
And answering crows and baby cries,

How many who shall say!
And many a song as wondrous well
With pangs and sweets intolerable
From lonely hearths too gray to tell,
God knows how utter gray!
And song from many a house of care
When pain has forced a footing there
And there's a Darkness on the stair
Will not be turned away—

And song—that song whose singers come
With old kind tales of pity from
The Great Compassion's lips,
That make the bells of Heaven to peal
Round pillows frosty with the feel
Of Death's cold finger tips—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,
As many tempers, moods and minds
As leaves are on a tree,
As many faiths and castes and creeds,
As many human bloods and breeds
As in the world may be;

The song of each and all who gaze
On Beauty in her naked blaze,
Or see her dimly in a haze,
Or get her light in fitful rays
And tiniest needles even,
The song of all not wholly dark,
Not wholly sunk in stupor stark
Too deep for groping Heaven—

And alleluias sweet and clear
And wild with beauty men mishear,
From choirs of song as near and dear
To Paradise as they,
The everlasting pipe and flute
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
And lips deaf men imagine mute
In wood and stone and clay,

The music of a lion strong
That shakes a hill a whole night long,
A hill as loud as he,
The twitter of a mouse among
Melodious greenery,
The ruby and the night-owl's song,
The nightingale's—all three,
The song of life that wells and flows
From every leopard, lark and rose
And everything that gleams or goes
Lack-luster in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Aye, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves
And upward ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime!
Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every chanting sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb!

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!
I heard it all and then although
I caught my flying senses, oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

THE LATE, LAST ROOK

The old gilt vane and spire receive
The last beam eastward striking;
The first shy bat to peep at eve
Has found her to his liking.
The western heaven is dull and gray,
The last red glow has followed day.

The late, last rook is housed and will
With cronies lie till morrow;
If there's a rook loquacious still
In dream he hunts a furrow,
And flaps behind a specter team,
Or ghostly scarecrows walk his dream.

THE BULL

See an old unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful,
Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go
Up and down the burning sky;
Tree-top cats purr drowsily
In the dim-day green below;
And troops of monkeys, nutting some,
All disputing, go and come;
And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine,
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine,
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high;

And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree,
Yellowing its greenery,
Keeps a watch on all the world.

All the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:
One he led, a bull of blood
Newly come to lustihood,
Fought and put his prince to shame,
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,
Left him there without a lick,
Left him for the birds to pick,
Left him for the carrion,
Vilely from their bosom cast
Wisdom, worth and love at last.
When the lion left his lair
And roared his beauty through the hills,
And the vultures pecked their quills
And flew into the middle air,
Then this prince no more to reign
Came to life and lived again.
He snuffed the herd in far retreat,
He saw the blood upon the ground,
And snuffed the burning airs around
Still with beevish odors sweet,
While the blood ran down his head
And his mouth ran slaver red.
Pity him, this fallen chief,
All his splendor, all his strength
All his beauty's breadth and length
Dwindled down with shame and grief,
Half the bull he was before,
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake,
Surly, stupid, half asleep,
Waiting for his heart to break
And the birds to join the flies
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes,—

Standing with his head hung down
In a stupor, dreaming things:
Green savannas, jungles brown,
Battlefields and bellowings,
Bulls undone and lions dead
And vultures flapping overhead.
Dreaming things: of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean
In the valley warm and green,
Full of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries;
Dreaming over once again
How he wandered with a throng
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,
Wandered on from plain to plain,
Up the hill and down the dale,
Always at his mother's tail;
How he lagged behind the herd,
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,
And she turned and ran to him
Blaring at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day,
When her drained and drying paps
Turned him to the sweets and saps,
Richer fountains by the way,
And she left the bull she bore
And he looked to her no more;
And his little frame grew stout,
And his little legs grew strong,
And the way was not so long;
And his little horns came out,
And he played at butting trees
And bowlder-stones and tortoises,
Joined a game of knobby skulls
With the youngsters of his year,
All the other little bulls,
Learning both to bruise and bear,

Learning how to stand a shock
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,
Dreaming of a time less far,
When the faint but certain star
Of destiny burned clear for him,
And a fierce and wild unrest
Broke the quiet of his breast,
And the gristles of his youth
Hardened in his comely pow,
And he came to fighting growth,
Beat his bull and won his cow,
And flew his tail and trampled off
Past the tallest, vain enough.
And curved about in splendor full
And curved again and snuffed the airs
As who should say, Come out who dares!
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,
And knew that here was surely one
That backed for no bull, fearing none.
And the leader of the herd
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,
And shook the forest with his sound,
Bellowed at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.
Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,
Surely dreaming of the hour
When he came to sultan power,
And they owned him master-horn,
Chiefest bull of all among
Bulls and cows a thousand strong,
And in all the trampling herd
Not a bull that barred his way,
Not a cow that said him nay,
Not a bull or cow that erred
In the furnace of his look
Dared a second, worse rebuke;
Not in all the forest wide,

Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,
Not another dared him then,
Dared him and again defied;
Not a sovereign buck or boar
Came a second time for more.
Not a serpent that survived
Once the terrors of his hoof,
Risked a second time reproof,
Came a second time and lived,
Not a serpent in its skin
Came again for discipline;

Not a leopard bright as flame,
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,
That a wooden tree might feel,
Met his fury once and came
For a second reprimand,
Not a leopard in the land,
Not a lion of them all,
Not a lion of the hills,
Hero of a thousand kills,
Dared a second fight and fall,
Dared that ram terrific twice,
Paid a second time the price. . . .

Pity him, this dupe of dream,
Leader of the herd again
Only in his daft old brain,
Once again the bull supreme
And bull enough to bear the part
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake.
Even now the swarm of flies
Blackening his bloodshot eyes
Bursts and blusters round the lake,
Scattered from the feast half-fed,
By great shadows overhead,

And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday,
Turns to meet the loathly birds

Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'Twould ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit ponies,
And little hunted hares.

THE HAMMERS

Noise of hammers once I heard
Many hammers, busy hammers,
Beating, shaping night and day,
Shaping, beating dust and clay
To a palace; saw it reared;
Saw the hammers laid away.

And I listened, and I heard
Hammers beating, night and day,
In the palace newly reared,
Beating it to dust and clay:
Other hammers, muffled hammers,
Silent hammers of decay.

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in a vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat:
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

THE MYSTERY

He came and took me by the hand
  Up to a red rose tree,
He kept His meaning to Himself
  But gave a rose to me.

I did not pray Him to lay bare
  The mystery to me,
Enough the rose was Heaven to smell,
  And His own face to see.

CHARLES DALMON

Charles Dalmon was born at Old Shoreham, Sussex, in 1872. He was supposed to be educated at a small country school, but most of his education, he says, came from his mother and from the shepherds and farm-laborers around him in his boyhood. Although not typical of the period, his early contributions appeared in *The Yellow Book*, since which time he has appeared in liberal as well as conservative periodicals.

Dalmon's poetry is neither large in theme nor in gesture. Grace is its chief characteristic, typified by the very titles of his books: *Minutiae* (1892), *Song Favors* (1895), *A Poor Man's Riches* (1922), *Singing as I Go* (1927). But Dalmon's verse is saved from slightness or insipidity by the neatness of its execution and a half-submerged wit.

THE OLD IRISH YARD-MAN

The number of his years no creature knows:
  They must have had the fortune to begin
  Before the doctrine of original sin,
For even when he takes a stick and throws
To stop a noisy conference of crows,
  The eyes of him, deep-set in wrinkled skin,
  Are lighted from such innocence within,
That all the pureness of his nature shows.

And when, at feeding time, the yard-fowls chase
Each other in a wild and reckless race
To where he stands and calls, and ducks and geese
And hens and cockerels are told to cease
Their greedy clatter, in his Gaelic words
I hear St. Francis preaching to the birds.

FOUR QUATRAINS

MUCH IN LITTLE

The mighty oak tree from an acorn towers;
A tiny seed can fill a field with flowers;
One bell alone tolls out the death of kings;
In every Sussex skylark Shelley sings.

IN THE BEGINNING

Did one adventure bring to pass
The finished first green blade of grass;
Or those blue jewels that inlay
The pinions of the noisy jay?

TO THE GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER

No ghost should be allowed to walk
And make such havoc with its talk:
When folks are dead, they should retire—
I have no patience with you, sire!

DOCUMENTS

What man has written man may read;
But God fills every root and seed
With cryptic words, too strangely set
For mortals to decipher yet.

JOHN McCRAE

John McCrae was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, in 1872. He was graduated in arts in 1894 and in medicine in 1898, finished his studies at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, and returned to Canada, joining the staff of the Medical School of McGill Uni-

versity. He was a lieutenant of artillery in South Africa (1899-1900) and was in charge of the Medical Division of the McGill Canadian General Hospital during the World War. After serving two years, he died of pneumonia, January, 1918, his volume, *In Flanders Fields* (1919), appearing posthumously.

Few who read the title poem of his book, possibly the most widely read poem produced by the war, realize that it is a perfect rondeau, one of the strictest of the French forms.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
  That mark our place; and in the sky
  The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
  Loved and were loved, and now we lie
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
  The torch; be yours to hold it high.
  If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
    In Flanders fields.

FORD MADOX (HUEFFER) FORD

Ford Madox Hueffer (who, later in life, became Ford Madox Ford) was born in 1873, the grandson of Ford Madox Brown, a cousin of the Rossettis. He was educated at University College, London, and abroad, returning to edit *The English Review*. During his editorship he discovered many unknown writers who have since made reputations.

As an author, Ford first came into prominence as an associate of Joseph Conrad, collaborating with the latter on *The Inheritors* (1901) and *Romance* (1901). As a novelist in his own right, his fame rests on the Tietjens series: *Some Do Not* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up* (1926) and *Last Post* (1928). Although utterly different from Galsworthy's cycle, the

Tietjens novels prompt inevitable comparison with *The Forsyte Saga*. Ford's protagonist is a single man, not a family, and he deals with the impact of events in rapid succession on an individual, instead of social forces reacting through a period on a group. With the War as a living backdrop and in a style utterly his own, Ford has projected a figure, nervously intense, dully heroic and wholly characteristic of his times.

Although known primarily as a novelist, Ford has been a poet at intervals most of his life. *Collected Poems* (1913), *On Heaven and Poems Written on Active Service* (1918) and *New Poems* (1927) show a style that never strives to be "poetic" and is as personal as Ford's prose. Allied to no "school" Ford displays, in such poems as "Gray Matter" and "A House," an essential but unspectacular modernity.

GRAY MATTER

She. They leave us nothing.
He. Still, a little's left.
She. A crabbed, ancient, dried biologist,
Somewhere very far from the sea, closed up from the sky,
Shut in from the leaves, destroys our hopes and us.
He. Why no, our hopes and . . .
She. In his "Erster Heft"
Page something, I forget the line, he says
That, hidden as deep in the brain as he himself from hope,
There's this gray matter.
He. Why, 'tis there, dear heart.
She. That, if that hidden matter cools, decays,
Dies—what you will—our souls die out as well;
Since, hidden in the millionth of a cell,
Is all we have to give us consciousness.
He. Suppose it true.
She. Ah, never; better die,
Better have never lived than face this mist,
Better have never toiled to such distress.
He. It matters little.
She. Little!—Where shall I,
The woman, where shall you take part,
My poet? Where has either of us scope
In all this dead-dawning century that lacks all faith,
All hope, all aim, and all the mystery

That comforteth. Since he victorious
With his cold vapors chill out you and me,
The woman and the poet?
He. Never, dear.
For you and I remain,
The woman and the poet. And soft rain
Still falls and still the crocus flames,
The blackbird calls.
She. But half the sweet is gone.
The voices of our children at their games
Lack half their ring.
He. Why, never, dear. Out there
The sea's a cord of silver, still to south
Beyond the marsh.
She. Aye, but beyond it all,
And all beneath and all above, half of the glory's done.
And I and you . . .
He. Why, no. The ancient sun
Shines as it ever shone, and still your mouth
Is sweet as of old it was.
She. But what remains?
He. All the old pains,
And all the old sweet pleasures and the mystery
Of time, slow travel and unfathomed deep.
She. And then this cold extinction? . . .
He. Dreamless sleep.
She. And nothing matters?
He. All the old, old things.
Whether to Church or College rings
The clamorous bell of creeds,
We, in the lush, far meads,
Poet and woman, past the city walls,
Hear turn by turn the burden of their calls,
Believe what we believe, feel what we feel,
Like what we list of what they cry within
Cathedral or laborat'ry,
Since by the revolution of the wheel,
The one swings under, let us wait content.
She. Yet it is hard.
He. Ah, no. A sure intent,
For me and you.

The right, true, joyful word, the sweet, true phrase,
The calling of our children from the woods these garden days
Remain.—These drops of rain have laid the dust
And in our soft brown seed-beds formed the crust
We needed for our sowings. Bring your seed,
And you shall prick it in, I close the row.
Be sure the little grains your hands have pressed
Tenderly, lovingly, home, shall flourish best.
She. Aye, you are still my poet.
He. Even so
Betwixt the rain and shine. Half true's still true
More truly than the thing that's proved and dead.
The sun lends flame to every crocus head
Once more, and we once more must sow and weed
Since in the earth the newly stirring seed
Begins the ancient mystery anew.

"THERE SHALL BE MORE JOY . . ."

The little angels of Heaven
Each wear a long white dress,
And in the tall arcadings
Play ball and play at chess;

With never a soil on their garments,
Not a sigh the whole day long,
Not a bitter note in their pleasure,
Not a bitter note in their song.

But they shall know keener pleasure,
And they shall know joy more rare—
Keener, keener pleasure
When you, my dear, come there.

. . . . .

The little angels of Heaven
Each wear a long white gown,
And they lean over the ramparts
Waiting and looking down.

A HOUSE

(*First Part*)

The House. I am the House!
I resemble
The drawing of a child
That draws "just a house." Two windows and two doors,
Two chimney pots;
Only two floors.
Three windows on the upper one; a fourth
Looks towards the north.
I am very simple and mild;
I am very gentle and sad and old.
I have stood too long.
The Tree. I am the great Tree over above this House.
I resemble
The drawing of a child. Drawing "just a tree"
The child draws Me!
Heavy leaves, old branches, old knots:
I am more old than the house is old.
I have known nights so cold
I used to tremble;
For the sap was frozen in my branches,
And the mouse,
That stored her nuts in my knot-holes, died. I am strong
Now . . . Let a storm come wild
Over the Sussex Wold,
I no longer fear it.
I have stood too long!
The Nightingale. I am the Nightingale. The summer through
I sit
In the great tree, watching the house, and throw jewels
over it!
There is no one watching but I; no other soul to waken
Echoes in this valley night.
The Unborn Son of the House. You are mistaken!
I am the Son of the House!—
That shall have silver limbs, and clean straight haunches,
Lean hips, clean lips and a tongue of gold;
That shall inherit

A golden voice, and waken
A whole world's wonder!
The Nightingale. Young blood! You are right,
So you and I only
Listen and watch and waken
Under
The stars of the night.
The Dog of the House. You are mistaken!
This house stands lonely.
Let but a sound sound in the seven acres that surround
Their sleeping house,
And I, seeming to sleep, shall awaken.
Let but a mouse
Creep in the bracken,
I seeming to drowse, I shall hearken.
Let but a shadow darken
Their threshold; let but a finger
Lie long or linger,
Holding their latch:
I am their Dog. And I watch.
I am just Dog. And being His hound
I lie
All night with my head on my paws,
Watchful and whist!
The Nightingale. So you and I and their Son and I
Watch alone under the stars of the sky.
The Cat of the House. I am the Cat. And you lie!
I am the Atheist!
All laws
I coldly despise.
I have yellow eyes;
I am the Cat on the Mat the child draws
When it first has a pencil to use.
The Milch-goat. I am the Goat. I give milk!
The Cat of the House. I muse
Over the hearth with my 'minishing eyes
Until after
The last coal dies.
Every tunnel of the mouse,
Every channel of the cricket,

I have smelt.
I have felt
The secret shifting of the moldered rafter,
And heard
Every bird in the thicket.
I see
You,
Nightingale up in your tree!

The Nightingale. The night takes a turn towards coldness; the stars
Waver and shake.
Truly more wake,
More thoughts are afloat;
More folk are afoot than I knew!

The Milch-goat. I, even I, am the Goat!

Cat of the House. Enough of your stuff of dust and of mud!
I, born of a race of strange things,
Of deserts, great temples, great kings,
In the hot sand where the nightingale never sings!
Old he-gods of ingle and hearth,
Young she-gods of fur and of silk—
Not the mud of the earth—
Are the things that I dream of!

The Milch-goat. Tibby-Tab, more than you deem of
I dream of when chewing the cud
For my milk:
Who was born
Of a Nan with one horn and a liking for gin
In the backyard of an inn.
A child of Original Sin,
With a fleece of spun-silk
And two horns in the bud—
I, made in the image of Pan,
With my corrugate, vicious-cocked horn,
Now make milk for a child yet unborn.
That's a come-down!
And you with your mouse-colored ruff,
Discoursing your stuff-of-a-dream,
Sell your birthright for cream,
And bolt from a cuff or a frown.
That's a come-down!

So let it be! That's enough.
The House. The top star of the Plow now mounts
Up to his highest place
The dace
Hang silent in the pool.
The night is cool
Before the dawn. Behind the blind
Dies down the one thin candle.
Our harried man,
My lease-of-a-life-long Master,
Studies against disaster;
Gropes for some handle
Against too heavy Fate; pores over his accounts,
Studying into the morn
For the sake of his child unborn.
The Unborn Son of the House. The vibrant notes of the spheres,
Thin, sifting sounds of the dew,
I hear. The mist on the meres
Rising I hear . . . So here's
To a lad shall be lusty and bold,
With a voice and a heart ringing true!
To a house of a livelier hue!
The House. That is true!
I have stood here too long and grown old.
Himself. What is the matter with the wicks?
What on earth's the matter with the wax?
The candle wastes in the draught;
The blind's worn thin!
. . . Thirty-four and four, ten . . .
And ten . . . are forty-nine!
And twenty pun' twelve and six was all
I made by the clover.
It's a month since I laughed:
I have given up wine.
And then . . .
The Income Tax!
The Dog of the House. The mare's got out of the stable!
The Cat of the House. She's able, over and over,
To push up the stable latch . . .
Over and over again. You would say she's a witch,

With a spite on our Man!
The Milch-goat. Heu! Did you see how she ran!
She's after the clover; she's over the ditch,
Doing more harm than a dozen of goats
When there's no one to watch.
Yet she is the sober old mare with her skin full of oats,
Whereas we get dry bracken and heather;
Snatching now and then a scrap of old leather,
Or half an old tin,
As the price of original sin!
Himself. I shall live to sell
The clock from the hall;
I shall have to pawn my old Dad's watch,
Or fell
The last old oak; or sell half the stock . . .
Or all!
Or the oak chest out of the hall.
One or the other—or all.
God, it is hell to be poor
For ever and ever, keeping the Wolf from the door!
The Cat of the House. Wouldn't you say
That Something, heavy and furry and gray,
Was sniffing round the door?
Wouldn't you say
Skinny fingers, stretching from the thicket,
Felt for the latch of the wicket?
Himself. You would almost say
These blows were repercussions
Of an avenging Fate!
But how have we earned them . . .
The sparks that fell on the cornricks and burned them
Still in the ear;
And all the set-backs of the year—
Frost, drought and demurrage,
The tiles blown half off the roof?
What is it, what is it all for?
Chastisement of pride? I swear we have no pride!
We ride
Behind an old mare with a flea-bitten hide!
Or over-much love for a year-old bride?
But it's your duty to love your bride! . . . But still,

All the sows that died,
And the cows all going off milk;
The cream coming out under proof;
The hens giving over laying;
The bullocks straying,
Getting pounded over the hill!
It used to be something—cold feet going over
The front of a trench after Stand-to at four!
But these other things—God, how they make you blench!
Aye, these are the pip-squeaks that call for
Four-in-the-morning courage . . .
May you never know, my wench,
That's asleep up the stair!

Herself (*In her sleep*). I'll have a kitchen all white tiles;
And a dairy, all marble the shelves and the floor;
And a larder, cream-white and full of air.
I'll have whitewood kegs for the flour,
And blackwood kegs for the rice and barley,
And silvery jugs for the milk and cream . . .
O glorious Me!
And hour by hour by hour by hour,
On piles of cushions from hearth to door,
I'll sit sewing my silken seams,
I'll sit just dreaming my silver dreams;
With a little, mettlesome, brown-legged Charley,
To leave his ploys[1] and come to my knee,
And question how God can be Three-in-One
And One-in-Three.
And all the day and all the day
Nothing but hoys[2] for my dearest one;
And no care at all but to kiss and twine;
And nought to contrive for but ploys and play
For my son, my son, my son, my son!
Only at nine,
With the dinner finished, the men at their wine;
And the girls in the parlor at forfeits for toffee,
I'll make such after-dinner coffee . . .
But it's all like a dream!

Himself. If Dixon could pay! . . . But he never will.

[1] Ploys = games, sports.
[2] Hoys = enticements.

He promised to do it yesterday . . . But poor old Dicky's
been through the mill.
And it's late—it's too late to sit railing at Fate!
He'd pay if he could: but he's got *his* fix on . . .
Yet . . . If he *could* pay—
God!—It would carry us over the day
Of Herself!

The Clock in the Room. I am the Clock on the Shelf!
Is . . . Was . . . Is . . . Was!
Too late . . . Because . . . Too late . . . Because . . .
One! . . . Two! . . . Three! . . . Four!

Himself. Just over The Day and a week or two more!
And we'd maybe get through.
Not with a hell of a lot
Of margin to spare . . . But just through!

The Clock in the Hall. One! . . . Two! . . . One! . . . Two!
As . . . your . . . hours . . . pass
I re . . . cord them
Though you . . . waste them
Or have . . . stored them

ALL . . .
One!
Two!
Three!
Four!
Begun!
Half through!
Let be!
No more at all!
I am the Great Clock in the Hall!

WALTER DE LA MARE

Walter (John) De la Mare was born at Charlton, in Kent, in 1873. He was educated at St. Paul's school in London and was employed for eighteen years in the English branch of The Standard Oil Company of America.

His first volume, *Songs of Childhood* (1902), was published under the pseudonym of "Walter Ramal," an anagram of part of his name. The first volume published under his own name was the novel *Henry Brocken* (1904), a form to which he returned with

phenomenal success in *Memoirs of a Midget* (1921), a permanent edition to the world's small stock of philosophic fiction.

By 1929 De la Mare was the author of some twenty-three volumes which seem to fall into four categories: (1) The poetry of metaphysical phantasy. (2) The poems to and of children. (3) The mixture of prose and verse achieved in *Ding Dong Bell* (1924). (4) The introspective prose.

Although not the most important, his most popular verse is that which is centered in the child's sphere. As Harold Williams has written, "De la Mare is the singer of a young and romantic world, understanding and perceiving as a child." This poet paints simple scenes of miniature loveliness; he uses fragments of fairy-like delicacy and, with the least consequential matter, achieves a grace remarkable in its appeal. "In a few words, seemingly artless and unsought" (to quote Williams again), "he can express a pathos or a hope as wide as man's life."

De la Mare is an astonishing joiner of words; in *Peacock Pie* (1913) and *Down-a-Down Derry* (1922) he surprises us again and again by transforming what began as a child's nonsense-rhyme into a thrilling snatch of music. A score of times he takes events as casual as the feeding of chickens or the swallowing of physic, berry-picking, eating, hair-cutting—and turns them into magic. These poems read like lyrics of William Shakespeare rendered by Mother Goose. The trick of revealing the ordinary in whimsical colors, of catching the commonplace off its guard, is the first of De la Mare's two chief gifts.

This poet's second gift is his sense of the supernatural, of the fantastic other-world that lies on the edges of our consciousness. Sometimes, as in "At the Keyhole" and "The Mocking Fairy," the sinister turns into the lightly *macabre;* often the unbelievable, as in "Sam" and "Berries," is more homely-natural than the real. *The Listeners* (1912) is a book that, like all the best of De la Mare, is full of half-heard whispers. Moonlight and mystery seem soaked in the lines, and a cool wind from Nowhere blows over them. That most suggestive of modern verses, "The Listeners," and the brief music of "An Epitaph" are two examples among many. In the first of these poems there is an uncanny splendor. What we have here is the effect, the thrill, the overtones, of a ghost story rather than the narrative itself—the less than half-told adventure of some new Childe Roland heroically challenging a heedless universe. Never have silence and black night been reproduced more creepily, nor has the symbolism of man's courage facing the cryptic riddle of life been more memorably expressed.

De la Mare's chief distinction, however, lies not so much in what he says as in how he says it; he can even take outworn words like

"thridding," "athwart," "amaranthine" and make them live again in a poetry that is of no time and of all time. He writes, it has been said, as much for antiquity as for posterity; he is a poet who is distinctively in the world and yet not wholly of it.

Motley and Other Poems (1918) was followed by *Collected Poems, 1901-1918,* published in 1920, and *The Veil and Other Poems* (1921). *Come Hither* (1923), a collection apparently designed for children, is actually for mature minds. In all of these—even in the anthology—De la Mare betrays a speculation which is kin to a preoccupation: the paradox of mortality and immortality. Henry Newbolt, in *New Paths on Helicon,* recognizes this pervading quality, but prefers to call it "an inveterate habit of questioning. . . . Even the descriptions in which he excels are of the nature of a search: he attempts, like the Pre-Raphaelite painters, to pierce by intensity of vision through to the reality behind the visible word."

Technically, De la Mare's poetry is most interesting for the manner in which he achieves a new music merely by extending the line of an old one. His extra syllables, turns and grace-notes give novelty to themes and measures in themselves traditional. His idiom, while not spectacular, is as singular and unmistakable as a finger-print. His form, like that of every true poet, does not rise from cultivated ingenuity nor conscious difference, but is inherent in the *Mensch an sich,* being a reflection of his individuality.

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,
  Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
  Of the forest's ferny floor.
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
  Above the Traveler's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
  "Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveler;
  No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
  Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
  That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
  To that voice from the world of men:

Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveler's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Aye, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

AN EPITAPH

Here lies a most beautiful lady,
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.

But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;
However rare—rare it be;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

THE TRUANTS

Ere my heart beats too coldly and faintly
To remember sad things, yet be gay,
I would sing a brief song of the world's little children
Magic hath stolen away.

The primroses scattered by April,
  The stars of the wide Milky Way,
Cannot outnumber the hosts of the children
  Magic hath stolen away.

The buttercup green of the meadows,
  The snow of the blossoming may,
Lovelier are not than the legions of children
  Magic hath stolen away.

The waves tossing surf in the moonbeam,
  The albatross lone on the spray,
Alone know the tears wept in vain for the children
  Magic hath stolen away.

In vain: for at hush of the evening,
  When the stars twinkle into the gray,
Seems to echo the far-away calling of children
  Magic hath stolen away.

OLD SUSAN

When Susan's work was done, she'd sit
With one fat guttering candle lit,
And window opened wide to win
The sweet night air to enter in;
There, with a thumb to keep her place
She'd read, with stern and wrinkled face.
Her mild eyes gliding very slow
Across the letters to and fro,
While wagged the guttering candle flame
In the wind that through the window came.
And sometimes in the silence she
Would mumble a sentence audibly,
Or shake her head as if to say,
"You silly souls, to act this way!"
And never a sound from night I'd hear,
Unless some far-off cock crowed clear;
Or her old shuffling thumb should turn
Another page; and rapt and stern,

Through her great glasses bent on me,
She'd glance into reality;
And shake her round old silvery head,
With—"You!—I thought you was in bed!"—
Only to tilt her book again,
And rooted in Romance remain.

THE OLD MEN

Old and alone sit we,
Caged, riddle-rid men;
Lost to earth's "Listen!" and "See!"
Thought's "Wherefore?" and "When?"
Only far memories stray
Of a past once lovely, but now
Wasted and faded away,
Like green leaves from the bough.
Vast broods the silence of night;
And the ruinous moon
Lifts on our faces her light,
Whence all dreaming is gone.
We speak not; trembles each head;
In their sockets our eyes are still;
Desire as cold as the dead,
Without wonder or will.
And one, with a lanthorn, draws near,
At clash with the moon in our eyes:
"Where art thou?" he asks: "I am here!"
One by one we arise.
And none lifts a hand to withhold
A friend from the touch of that foe:
Heart cries unto heart, "Thou art old!"
Yet reluctant we go.

SOME ONE

Some one came knocking
  At my wee, small door;
Some one came knocking,
  I'm sure—sure—sure;

I listened, I opened,
  I looked to left and right,
But nought there was a-stirring
  In the still dark night;
Only the busy beetle
  Tap-tapping in the wall,
Only from the forest
  The screech-owl's call,
Only the cricket whistling
  While the dewdrops fall,
So I know not who came knocking,
  At all, at all, at all.

AT THE KEYHOLE

"Grill me some bones," said the Cobbler,
  "Some bones, my pretty Sue;
I'm tired of my lonesome with heels and soles,
Springsides and uppers too;
A mouse in the wainscot is nibbling;
A wind in the keyhole drones;
And a sheet webbed over my candle, Susie,
  Grill me some bones!"

"Grill me some bones," said the Cobbler,
  "I sat at my tic-tac-to;
And a footstep came to my door and stopped,
And a hand groped to and fro;
And I peered up over my boot and last;
And my feet went cold as stones:—
I saw an eye at the keyhole, Susie!—
  Grill me some bones!"

THE MOCKING FAIRY

"Won't you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill?"
  Quoth the Fairy, nidding, nodding in the garden;
"*Can't* you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill?"
  Quoth the Fairy, laughing softly in the garden;
But the air was still, the cherry boughs were still,

And the ivy-tod[1] 'neath the empty sill,
And never from her window looked out Mrs. Gill
On the Fairy shrilly mocking in the garden.

"What have they done with you, you poor Mrs. Gill?"
Quoth the Fairy brightly glancing in the garden;
"Where have they hidden you, you poor old Mrs. Gill?"
Quoth the Fairy dancing lightly in the garden;
But night's faint veil now wrapped the hill,
Stark 'neath the stars stood the dead-still Mill,
And out of her cold cottage never answered Mrs. Gill
The Fairy mimbling mambling in the garden.

SAM

When Sam goes back in memory,
It is to where the sea
Breaks on the shingle, emerald-green,
In white foam, endlessly;
He says—with small brown eye on mine—
"I used to keep awake,
And lean from my window in the moon,
Watching those billows break.
And half a million tiny hands,
And eyes, like sparks of frost,
Would dance and come tumbling into the moon,
On every breaker tossed.
And all across from star to star,
I've seen the watery sea,
With not a single ship in sight,
Just ocean there, and me;
And heard my father snore. And once,
As sure as I'm alive,
Out of those wallowing, moon-flecked waves
I saw a mermaid dive;
Head and shoulders above the wave,
Plain as I now see you,
Combing her hair, now back, now front,
Her two eyes peeping through;
Calling me, 'Sam!'—quietlike—'Sam!' . . .

[1] Tod = dense foliage.

But me . . . I never went,
Making believe I kind of thought
'Twas some one else she meant . . .
Wonderful lovely there she sat,
Singing the night away,
All in the solitudinous sea
Of that there lonely bay.
P'raps," and he'd smooth his hairless mouth,
"P'raps, if 'twere now, my son,
P'raps, if I heard a voice say, 'Sam!'
Morning would find me gone."

BERRIES

There was an old woman
Went blackberry picking
Along the hedges
From Weep to Wicking.
Half a pottle—
No more she had got,
When out steps a Fairy
From her green grot;
And says, "Well, Jill,
Would 'ee pick 'ee mo?"
And Jill, she curtseys,
And looks just so.
"Be off," says the Fairy,
"As quick as you can,
Over the meadows
To the little green lane,
That dips to the hayfields
Of Farmer Grimes:
I've berried those hedges
A score of times;
Bushel on bushel
I'll promise 'ee, Jill,
This side of supper
If 'ee pick with a will."
She glints very bright,
And speaks her fair;
Then lo, and behold!
She had faded in air.

Be sure Old Goodie
  She trots betimes
Over the meadows
  To Farmer Grimes.
And never was queen
  With jewelry rich
As those same hedges
  From twig to ditch;
Like Dutchmen's coffers,
  Fruit, thorn, and flower—
They shone like William
  And Mary's Bower.
And be sure Old Goodie
  Went back to Weep,
So tired with her basket
  She scarce could creep.

When she comes in the dusk
  To her cottage door,
There's Towser wagging
  As never before,
To see his Missus
  So glad to be
Come from her fruit-picking
  Back to he.
As soon as next morning
  Dawn was gray,
The pot on the hob
  Was simmering away;
And all in a stew
  And a hugger-mugger
Towser and Jill
  A-boiling of sugar,
And the dark clear fruit
  That from Faërie came
For syrup and jelly
  And blackberry jam.

Twelve jolly gallipots
  Jill put by;
And one little teeny one,
  One inch high;

And that she's hidden
A good thumb deep,
Half way over
From Wicking to Weep.

ALL BUT BLIND

All but blind
In his chambered hole
Gropes for worms
The four-clawed Mole.

All but blind
In the evening sky,
The hooded Bat
Twirls softly by.

All but blind
In the burning day
The Barn-Owl blunders
On her way.

And blind as are
These three to me,
So, blind to Some-one
I must be.

SUMMER EVENING

The sandy cat by the Farmer's chair
Mews at his knee for dainty fare;
Old Rover in his moss-greened house
Mumbles a bone, and barks at a mouse.
In the dewy fields the cattle lie
Chewing the cud 'neath a fading sky.
Dobbin at manger pulls his hay:
Gone is another summer's day.

THERE BLOOMS NO BUD IN MAY

There blooms no bud in May
Can for its white compare
With snow at break of day,
On fields forlorn and bare.

For shadow it hath rose,
Azure, and amethyst;
And every air that blows
Dies out in beauteous mist.

It hangs the frozen bough
With flowers on which the night
Wheeling her darkness through
Scatters a starry light.

Fearful of its pale glare
In flocks the starlings rise;
Slide through the frosty air,
And perch with plaintive cries.

Only the inky rook,
Hunched cold in ruffled wings,
Its snowy nest forsook,
Caws of unnumbered Springs.

THE SCARECROW

All winter through I bow my head
Beneath the driving rain;
The North wind powders me with snow
And blows me black again;
At midnight 'neath a maze of stars
I flame with glittering rime,
And stand, above the stubble, stiff
As mail at morning-prime.
But when that child, called Spring, and all
His host of children, come,
Scattering their buds and dew upon
These acres of my home,
Some rapture in my rags awakes;
I lift void eyes and scan
The skies for crows, those ravening foes
Of my strange master, Man.
I watch him striding lank behind
His clashing team, and know
Soon will the wheat swish body high
Where once lay sterile snow;

Soon shall I gaze across a sea
  Of sun-begotten grain,
Which my unflinching watch hath sealed
  For harvest once again.

THE GHOST

"Who knocks?" "I, who was beautiful,
Beyond all dreams to restore,
I, from the roots of the dark thorn am hither,
And knock on the door."

"Who speaks?" "I—once was my speech
Sweet as the bird's on the air.
When echo lurks by the waters to heed;
'Tis I speak thee fair."

"Dark is the hour!" "Aye, and cold."
"Lone is my house." "Ah, but mine?"
"Sight, touch, lips, eyes yearned in vain."
"Long dead these to thine. . . ."

Silence. Still faint on the porch
Brake the flames of the stars.
In gloom groped a hope-wearied hand
Over keys, bolts, and bars.

Dews were still betwixt us twain;
Stars a trembling beauty shed;
Yet—not a whisper comes again
Of the words he said.

SILVER

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;

From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew
Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar,
From their sand the conies creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain;
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
"Rest, rest, and rest again."

G. K. CHESTERTON

That brilliant journalist, novelist, essayist, publicist and lyricist, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, was born at Campden Hill, Kensington, in 1874, and began his literary life by reviewing books on art for various magazines. He is best known as a writer of paradoxical essays on anything and everything, such as *Tremendous Trifles*

(1909), *Varied Types* (1905), and *All Things Considered* (1910). But he is also a stimulating critic; a keen appraiser, as shown in his volume *Heretics* (1905), his analytical studies of Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, and George Bernard Shaw; a writer of strange and grotesque romances like *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1906), *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), which Chesterton himself has sub-titled "A Nightmare," and that mad extravaganza with songs for a sublimated comic-opera, *The Flying Inn* (1914). This being insufficient to exhaust his creative energy, he is also the author of several books of fantastic short stories, ranging from the whimsical narratives in *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905) to that amazing sequence begun with *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911)—which is a series of religious detective stories!

Besides being the creator of all of these, Chesterton finds time to be a prolific if sometimes too acrobatic newspaperman, a lay preacher in disguise (witness *Orthodoxy* [1908], *What's Wrong with the World* [1910], *The Ball and the Cross* [1909]) and a pamphleteer. He is also—his admirers say, primarily—a poet. His first volume of verse, *The Wild Knight and Other Poems* (1900), a collection of quaintly flavored affirmative verses, was followed by *The Ballad of the White Horse* (1911), one long poem which, in spite of Chesterton's ever-present sermonizing, is possibly the most stirring creation he has achieved. This poem has the vigor, the spontaneity, if not quite the simplicity of the true ballad.

Scarcely less notable is the ringing "Lepanto" from his later more epigrammatic *Poems* (1915) which, anticipating the clanging verses of Vachel Lindsay's "The Congo," is one of the finest of modern chants. It is interesting to see how the syllables beat, as though on brass; it is thrilling to feel how, in one's pulses, the armies sing, the feet tramp, the drums snarl, and all the tides of marching crusaders roll out of lines like:

> Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
> Don John of Austria is going to the war;
> Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
> In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold;
> Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
> Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes. . . .

Subsequent volumes have established the poet's rollicking medievalism, his mingled high spirits and high optimism. *Wine, Water, and Song* (1915) and *The Ballad of St. Barbara* (1922) have a humor—and a humanity—that is "at home in the streets and familiar among the stars."

Chesterton seemed to grow more prolific with every year. Two

plays were complete successes: *Magic* (1913) and *Johnson* (1928). *Tales of the Long Bow* (1925) is, as the title implies, a set of incredible short stories. The Father Brown series grew into five volumes, the best of the later ones being *The Incredulity of Father Brown* (1926). His transatlantic visit was recorded in *What I Saw in America* (1922). In an era devoted to quickly assimilated culture in the form of "outlines," he yielded to the fashion—and satirized it—in *The Outline of Sanity* (1926). His colorful *Collected Poems* appeared in 1927. The fantastic exploration of the limbo between reason and insanity—a subject which has always compelled Chesterton—resulted in fictions like *The Return of Don Quixote* (1927) and *The Poet and the Lunatics* (1929).

Chesterton, the prose-paradoxer, is a furiously yea-saying antagonist of a skeptical age. But it is Chesterton the poet who is more likely to outlive his period.

LEPANTO

White founts falling in the Courts of the sun,
And the Soldan of Byzantium is smiling as they run;
There is laughter like the fountains in that face of all men feared,
It stirs the forest darkness, the darkness of his beard;
It curls the blood-red crescent, the crescent of his lips;
For the inmost sea of all the earth is shaken with his ships.
They have dared the white republics up the capes of Italy,
They have dashed the Adriatic round the Lion of the Sea,
And the Pope has cast his arms abroad for agony and loss,
And called the kings of Christendom for swords about the Cross.
The cold queen of England is looking in the glass;
The shadow of the Valois is yawning at the Mass;
From evening isles fantastical rings faint the Spanish gun,
And the Lord upon the Golden Horn is laughing in the sun.

Dim drums throbbing, in the hills half heard,
Where only on a nameless throne a crownless prince has stirred,
Where, risen from a doubtful seat and half-attainted stall,
The last knight of Europe takes weapons from the wall,
The last and lingering troubadour to whom the bird has sung,
That once went singing southward when all the world was young.

In that enormous silence, tiny and unafraid,
Comes up along a winding road the noise of the Crusade.
Strong gongs groaning as the guns boom far,
Don John of Austria is going to the war,
Stiff flags straining in the night-blasts cold
In the gloom black-purple, in the glint old-gold,
Torchlight crimson on the copper kettle-drums,
Then the tuckets, then the trumpets, then the cannon, and he comes.
Don John laughing in the brave beard curled,
Spurning of his stirrups like the thrones of all the world,
Holding his head up for a flag of all the free.
Love-light of Spain—hurrah!
Death-light of Africa!
Don John of Austria
Is riding to the sea.

Mahound is in his paradise above the evening star,
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
He moves a mighty turban on the timeless houri's knees,
His turban that is woven of the sunsets and the seas.
He shakes the peacock gardens as he rises from his ease,
And he strides among the tree-tops and is taller than the trees;
And his voice through all the garden is a thunder sent to bring
Black Azrael and Ariel and Ammon on the wing.
Giants and the Genii,
Multiplex of wing and eye,
Whose strong obedience broke the sky
When Solomon was king.

They rush in red and purple from the red clouds of the morn,
From the temples where the yellow gods shut up their eyes in scorn;
They rise in green robes roaring from the green hells of the sea
Where fallen skies and evil hues and eyeless creatures be,
On them the sea-valves cluster and the gray sea-forests curl,
Splashed with a splendid sickness, the sickness of the pearl;
They swell in sapphire smoke out of the blue cracks of the ground,—
They gather and they wonder and give worship to Mahound.

And he saith, "Break up the mountains where the hermit-folk
can hide,
And sift the red and silver sands lest bone of saint abide,
And chase the Giaours flying night and day, not giving rest,
For that which was our trouble comes again out of the west.
We have set the seal of Solomon on all things under sun,
Of knowledge and of sorrow and endurance of things done.
But a noise is in the mountains, in the mountains; and I know
The voice that shook our palaces—four hundred years ago:
It is he that saith not 'Kismet'; it is he that knows not Fate;
It is Richard, it is Raymond, it is Godfrey at the gate!
It is he whose loss is laughter when he counts the wager worth,
Put down your feet upon him, that our peace be on the earth."
For he heard drums groaning and he heard guns jar,
(*Don John of Austria is going to the war.*)
Sudden and still—hurrah!
Bolt from Iberia!
Don John of Austria
Is gone by Alcalar.

St. Michael's on his Mountain in the sea-roads of the north
(*Don John of Austria is girt and going forth.*)
Where the gray seas glitter and the sharp tides shift
And the sea-folk labor and the red sails lift.
He shakes his lance of iron and he claps his wings of stone;
The noise is gone through Normandy; the noise is gone alone;
The North is full of tangled things and texts and aching eyes,
And dead is all the innocence of anger and surprise,
And Christian killeth Christian in a narrow dusty room,
And Christian dreadeth Christ that hath a newer face of doom,
And Christian hateth Mary that God kissed in Galilee,—
But Don John of Austria is riding to the sea.
Don John calling through the blast and the eclipse
Crying with the trumpet, with the trumpet to his lips,
Trumpet that sayeth *ha!*
Domino gloria!
Don John of Austria
Is shouting to the ships.

King Philip's in his closet with the Fleece about his neck
(*Don John of Austria is armed upon the deck.*)

The walls are hung with velvet that is black and soft as sin,
And little dwarfs creep out of it and little dwarfs creep in.
He holds a crystal phial that has colors like the moon,
He touches, and it tingles, and he trembles very soon,
And his face is as a fungus of a leprous white and gray
Like plants in the high houses that are shuttered from the day,
And death is in the phial and the end of noble work,
But Don John of Austria has fired upon the Turk.
Don John's hunting, and his hounds have bayed—
Booms away past Italy the rumor of his raid.
Gun upon gun, ha! ha!
Gun upon gun, hurrah!
Don John of Austria
Has loosed the cannonade.

The Pope was in his chapel before day or battle broke,
(*Don John of Austria is hidden in the smoke.*)
The hidden room in man's house where God sits all the year,
The secret window whence the world looks small and very dear.
He sees as in a mirror on the monstrous twilight sea
The crescent of his cruel ships whose name is mystery;
They fling great shadows foe-wards, making Cross and Castle dark,
They veil the plumèd lions on the galleys of St. Mark;
And above the ships are palaces of brown, black-bearded chiefs,
And below the ships are prisons, where with multitudinous griefs,
Christian captives, sick and sunless, all a laboring race repines
Like a race in sunken cities, like a nation in the mines.
They are lost like slaves that swat, and in the skies of morning hung
The stair-ways of the tallest gods when tyranny was young.
They are countless, voiceless, hopeless as those fallen or fleeing on
Before the high Kings' horses in the granite of Babylon.
And many a one grows witless in his quiet room in hell
Where a yellow face looks inward through the lattice of his cell,
And he finds his God forgotten, and he seeks no more a sign—
(*But Don John of Austria has burst the battle-line!*)

Don John pounding from the slaughter-painted poop,
Purpling all the ocean like a bloody pirate's sloop,
Scarlet running over on the silvers and the golds,
Breaking of the hatches up and bursting of the holds,
Thronging of the thousands up that labor under sea
White for bliss and blind for sun and stunned for liberty.
Vivat Hispania!
Domino Gloria!
Don John of Austria
Has set his people free!

Cervantes on his galley sets the sword back in the sheath
(*Don John of Austria rides homeward with a wreath.*)
And he sees across a weary land a straggling road in Spain,
Up which a lean and foolish knight for ever rides in vain,
And he smiles, but not as Sultans smile, and settles back the blade. . . .
(*But Don John of Austria rides home from the Crusade.*)

A PRAYER IN DARKNESS

This much, O heaven—if I should brood or rave,
Pity me not; but let the world be fed,
Yea, in my madness if I strike me dead,
Heed you the grass that grows upon my grave.

If I dare snarl between this sun and sod,
Whimper and clamor, give me grace to own,
In sun and rain and fruit in season shown,
The shining silence of the scorn of God.

Thank God the stars are set beyond my power,
If I must travail in a night of wrath;
Thank God my tears will never vex a moth,
Nor any curse of mine cut down a flower.

Men say the sun was darkened: yet I had
Thought it beat brightly, even on—Calvary:
And He that hung upon the Torturing Tree
Heard all the crickets singing, and was glad.

ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The men that worked for England
They have their graves at home;
And bees and birds of England
About the cross can roam.

But they that fought for England,
Following a falling star,
Alas, alas, for England
They have their graves afar.

And they that rule in England
In stately conclave met,
Alas, alas, for England
They have no graves as yet.

THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood,
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet!

THE PRAISE OF DUST

"What of vile dust?" the preacher said.
Methought the whole world woke,
The dead stone lived beneath my foot,
And my whole body spoke.

"You, that play tyrant to the dust,
And stamp its wrinkled face,
This patient star that flings you not
Far into homeless space,

"Come down out of your dusty shrine
The living dust to see,
The flowers that at your sermon's end
Stand blazing silently.

"Rich white and blood-red blossom; stones,
Lichens like fire encrust;
A gleam of blue, a glare of gold,
The vision of the dust.

"Pass them all by: till, as you come
Where, at a city's edge,
Under a tree—I know it well—
Under a lattice ledge,

"The sunshine falls on one brown head.
You, too, O cold of clay,
Eater of stones, may haply hear
The trumpets of that day.

"When God to all his paladins
By his own splendor swore
To make a fairer face than heaven,
Of dust and nothing more."

WINE AND WATER

Old Noah he had an ostrich farm and fowls on the largest scale,
He ate his egg with a ladle in an egg-cup big as a pail,
And the soup he took was Elephant Soup, and the fish he took was Whale,
But they all were small to the cellar he took when he set out to sail,
And Noah he often said to his wife when he sat down to dine,
"I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine."

The cataract of the cliff of heaven fell blinding off the brink
As if it would wash the stars away as suds go down a sink,
The seven heavens came roaring down for the throats of hell to drink,
And Noah he cocked his eye and said, "It looks like rain, I think,
The water has drowned the Matterhorn as deep as a Mendip mine,
But I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine."

But Noah he sinned, and we have sinned; on tipsy feet we trod,
Till a great big, black teetotaler was sent to us for a rod,
And you can't get wine at a P. S. A., or chapel, or Eisteddfod.
For the Curse of Water has come again because of the wrath of God,
And water is on the Bishop's board and the Higher Thinker's shrine,
But I don't care where the water goes if it doesn't get into the wine.

THE HOUSE OF CHRISTMAS

There fared a mother driven forth
  Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
  All men are at home.

The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay their heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honor and high surprise;
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.

A child in a foul stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,
But our hearts we lost—how long ago!
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,
And strange the plain things are,
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings,
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome;
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.

Gordon Bottomley was born at Keighley in 1874 and educated at the Grammar School, Keighley. He is best known as a dramatist, his volumes—and there are ten of them dating from 1904—having elicited high praise upon publication. When the condensed dramas were collected in two volumes, *King Lear's Wife and Other Plays* (1920) and *Gruach and Britain's Daughter* (1921), the tributes were still more enthusiastic. Referring to *Gruach*, which is a portrait of the young Lady Macbeth at the time of her first meeting with the Thane, Lascelles Abercrombie wrote, "It was remarkable enough that Mr. Bottomley should have proved himself capable of worthily inventing a prelude to 'Lear'; it is astonishing that the success should be repeated in a prelude to 'Macbeth.' But it has become clear now that at no time in the history of English poetry since the seventeenth century has the requisite combination of dramatic and poetic talents existed until now in the person of Mr. Bottomley."

His poetry, collected in *Chambers of Imagery, First Series* (1907), *Second Series* (1912), displays the same command of vivid characterization and imaginative vigor one finds in his poetic dramas. What lends technical, if contemporary, interest to both volumes is that they anticipated the effects of the Imagists long before the group created a movement. A comprehensive collection, *Poems of Thirty Years* (1925), synthesizes the combination of force and delicacy which is Bottomley's own. "The End of the World" (which should be read in connection with Abercrombie's play of the same title) is typical, simple in language and extraordinarily supple in rhythm. Here, as in his dramas, the fine intricacies of phrase are paralleled by a knit power of thought.

THE END OF THE WORLD

The snow had fallen many nights and days;
The sky was come upon the earth at last,
Sifting thinly down as endlessly
As though within the system of blind planets
Something had been forgot or overdriven.
The dawn now seemed neglected in the gray,
Where mountains were unbuilt and shadowless trees
Rootlessly paused or hung upon the air.
There was no wind, but now and then a sigh
Crossed that dry falling dust and rifted it
Through crevices of slate and door and casement.

Perhaps the new moon's time was even past.
Outside, the first white twilights were too void
Until a sheep called once, as to a lamb,
And tenderness crept everywhere from it;
But now the flock must have strayed far away.
The lights across the valley must be veiled,
The smoke lost in the grayness or the dusk.
For more than three days now the snow had thatched
That cow-house roof where it had ever melted
With yellow stains from the beasts' breath inside;
But yet a dog howled there, though not quite lately.
Some one passed down the valley swift and singing,
Yes, with locks spreaded like a son of morning;
But if he seemed too tall to be a man
It was that men had been so long unseen,
Or shapes loom larger through a moving snow.
And he was gone and food had not been given him.
When snow slid from an overweighted leaf
Shaking the tree, it might have been a bird
Slipping in sleep or shelter, whirring wings;
Yet never bird fell out, save once a dead one—
And in two days the snow had covered it.
The dog had howled again—or thus it seemed
Until a lean fox passed and cried no more.
All was so safe indoors where life went on
Glad of the close enfolding snow—O glad
To be so safe and secret at its heart,
Watching the strangeness of familiar things.
They knew not what dim hours went on, went by,
For while they slept the clock stopt newly wound
As the cold hardened. Once they watched the road,
Thinking to be remembered. Once they doubted
If they had kept the sequence of the days,
Because they heard not any sound of bells.
A butterfly, that hid until the Spring
Under a ceiling's shadow, dropt, was dead.
The coldness seemed more nigh, the coldness deepened
As a sound deepens into silences;
It was of earth and came not by the air;
The earth was cooling and drew down the sky.
The air was crumbling. There was no more sky.

Rails of a broken bed charred in the grate,
And when he touched the bars he thought the sting
Came from their heat—he could not feel such cold . . .
She said, "O do not sleep,
Heart, heart of mine, keep near me. No, no; sleep.
I will not lift his fallen, quiet eyelids,
Although I know he would awaken then—
He closed them thus but not of his own will.
He can stay with me while I do not lift them."

DAWN

A thrush is tapping a stone
With a snail-shell in its beak;
A small bird hangs from a cherry
Until the stem shall break.
No waking song has begun,
And yet birds chatter and hurry
And throng in the elm's gloom
Because an owl goes home.

EAGER SPRING

Whirl, snow, on the blackbird's chatter;
You will not hinder his song to come.
East wind, sleepless, you cannot scatter
Quince-bud, almond-bud,
Little grape-hyacinth's
Clustering brood.
Nor unfurl the tips of the plum.
No half-born stalk of a lily stops;
There is sap in the storm-torn bush;
And, ruffled by gusts in a snow-blurred copse,
"Pity to wait" sings a thrush.

Love, there are few Springs left for us;
They go, and the count of them as they go
Makes surer the count that is left for us.
More than the East wind, more than the snow,

I would put back these hours that bring
Buds and bees and are lost;
I would hold the night and the frost,
To save for us one more Spring.

EVELYN UNDERHILL

Evelyn Underhill was born in 1875, educated privately and attended King's College for Women, London, of which she is an Honorary Fellow. In 1921 she became the Upton lecturer on religion at Manchester College, Oxford. Interesting herself chiefly in metaphysical matters, she has written eight books on the inner life. Her volumes *Mysticism* (1911) to *The Mystics of the Church* (1925) have gained her a large following among Theosophists, and she has edited *The Cloud of Unknowing* as well as (with Rabindranath Tagore as collaborator) *The Poems of Kabir*.

Her own volumes of verse are *Immanence* (1913) and *Theophanies* (1916) which, apart from their religious appeal, are cloudy and involved. But in spite of her abstract subjects, Miss Underhill has written a few lyrics which, like the one here reprinted, have won their way into the anthologies of the period.

THE LADY POVERTY

I met her on the Umbrian hills;
  Her hair unbound, her feet unshod.
As one whom secret glory fills
  She walked, alone with God.

I met her in the city street:
  Oh, changed was all her aspect then!
With heavy eyes and weary feet
  She walked alone, with men.

A. E. COPPARD

A. E. Coppard was born January 4, 1878, at Folkestone, Kent, and has lived all his life in close contact with the soil of which he writes so faithfully. Unknown until 1921, his first volume, *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me*, immediately created an enthusiastic circle of readers on both sides of the Atlantic. *Clorinda Walks in Heaven* (1922) increased the number of his readers, and with *The Black*

Dog (1923), *Fishmonger's Fiddle* (1925) and *The Field of Mustard* (1927) his following has grown greatly in size and admiration.

These volumes of short tales vibrate with a prose so pointed and colorful that it is never without the glow of poetry. But Coppard is no less a poet when he writes in rhyme. Two privately printed volumes—*Hips and Haws* (1922) and *Pelagea* (1927)—communicate his half-earthy, half-eerie quality. The latter volume is particularly rich in those concisions which point his prose; landscape and figure are fixed in a few lines. "Betty Perrin" is a common enough figure; Coppard gives her a new dimension. "Winter Field" is another example of the ordinary in terms of the illuminating; it seems scarcely to have been consciously created but always to have existed.

Collected Poems, a volume awaited by Coppard's followers, appeared in 1929.

STAY, O STAY

Of love's designèd joys,
  Dream only, do not speak,
Lest every noting hour
  A separate vengeance take.

Holy is love, but frail
  With love's confined desires,
Against whose chosen urn
  Time like a thief conspires.

Keep silence; love will grow
  In its own darkened air,
A moon whose clouds do make
  Heaven and itself more fair.

WINTER FIELD

Sorrow on the acres,
  Wind in the thorn,
And an old man plowing
  Through the frosty morn.

A flock of the dark birds,
  Rooks and their wives,
Follow the plow team
  The old man drives;

And troops of starlings,
A-tittle-tat and prim,
Follow the rooks
That follow him.

BETTY PERRIN

Up the pound path
Long o' Lag Lane,
Lives an old woman
As never saw the rain,
Never saw the sea,
Nor the sun upon the earth:
Poor Betty Perrin,
Blind from her birth!

Chick nor child
Never blessed her day,
Nor a loving man
Ever came her way
With blessings in his heart
And the blarney on his tongue;
Blind was Betty Perrin
Since she was young.

She had sisters nine—
O, such pretty maidies!—
Two went on the town,
But most were decent ladies;
And Betty's pious pride
Bethanked the Lord for that:
Poor Miss Perrin,
Blind as a bat!

Both the saucy sisters
Cherished her and fed,
Bought her beer and skittles
Until they both were dead.
Dying thus so young,
Be sure they died of sin:
Pray, lovely daughters,
Never you begin!

Then the seven sisters
  Put her on the parish,
For they were truly wedded
  And she was hard to nourish.
Betty was a burden,
  A burden from her birth:
It would not hurt the living
  To give her to the earth.

Long o' Lag Lane,
  Up 'ayond the pound,
Still Betty Perrin
  Cumbereth the ground,
Sisterless as Eve
  With the Sword against the Door:
Poor Betty Perrin,
  Blind for evermore!

THE SLUGGARD

On our last night together
My love rose early:
Come—said my dear—will you not come with me
To see the sun arise?

But I lay still,
Mum as a Christmas lark.
"Will you not come with me?
The clock has struck the hour,
Night wavers and the birds will soon begin."
But I lay a-mumbling:
"There'll be ten thousand dawns before we die;
One dawn is like another;
It is dark and freezing on the wold;
Do not go, I do not care to go;
Lie here and sleep again."

I heard the sharp latch fall as she went forth alone,
Alone to see day break—the last of days—
Beyond the wood, that well of moving shade
From whence all shadows rise;
I heard the latch fall and I could not sleep.

The gold rays slanted on the bedroom wall
When she came back again.
She had seen the couth hills flow into the sky
And the coloring sun glide out of them,
And as the sun soared up—
A blooded hawk from Abyssinia—
The moon came too:
His rose was in the river,
Her lily in the sky.
And O the cowslips nodding in the warren!
And the coney babe no bigger than a purse!
O the enriching beams athwart the wood,
Where the white windflowers hid their timid lips
Pondering, and buds of beech were locked in bronze!

When I arose she set the dishes out,
And cooked a haddock,
And we ate together,
And then she said Good-by;
For she was a stranger,
Wandering far from home:
Good-by, Good-by.
So long, my dear and tender love,
So long.

How often now I go to greet the dawns!
I do not care for them,
It is tiring to rise and go,
And one dawn is much like another,
But I do see them often, often now,
Seeking for what may bless me in her eyes.

I shall see ten thousand dawns before I die.

THE PRODIGAL SON

When I forsook my homely town
And bade my luck good-by,
The lord of freedom flung me down
His sweet scourge from the sky;

But all the passionate winds ordained
His purpose to fulfill
Blew to a burning goal ungained,
Left me my idle will.

Sad are the harvests I amass,
And empty of all grain;
Thickens the dust upon the grass
No dews shall wash again;
Nought can unclog the unconfined
From pride so falsely kept,
Nor from my void but living mind
May its dead dreams be swept.

Ten thousand finer dreams of sleep,
And old songs sweet to hear,
Mock at my anguish as I keep
My journeying otherwhere;
I would not need one kingly frown,
Or yet bequeath one sigh,
Had I not left my shining town,
Nor bade my heart good-by.

THOMAS MACDONAGH

Thomas Macdonagh was born in Ireland in 1878. Like his fellow-martyrs, he gave up the promise of a great career to devote himself to the liberation of his country. His poems are few in number, but they are filled with that intensity which made him so striking as a leader of his political group.

In company with his compatriot-poets (see page 615), he was arrested and executed after the Easter Week Rising in Dublin in 1916. The poem "Of a Poet-Patriot," although written to commemorate a fellow-singer, might well serve as his own epitaph.

The Collected Poems of Thomas MacDonagh appeared posthumously in 1919. In the introduction, James Stephens wrote, "Here are the poems of a good man; and if, outside of rebellion and violence, you wish to know what his thoughts were like, you will find all his best here."

OF A POET-PATRIOT

His songs were a little phrase
  Of eternal song.
Drowned in the harping of lays
  More loud and long.

His deed was a single word,
  Called out alone
In a night when no echo stirred
  To laughter or moan.

But his songs new souls shall thrill,
  The loud harps dumb,
And his deed the echoes fill
  When the dawn is come.

WISHES FOR MY SON

(*Born on St. Cecilia's Day, 1912*)

Now, my son, is life for you,
And I wish you joy of it,—
Joy of power in all you do,
Deeper passion, better wit
Than I had who had enough,
Quicker life and length thereof,
More of every gift but love.

Love I have beyond all men,
Love that now you share with me—
What have I to wish you then
But that you be good and free,
And that God to you may give
Grace in stronger days to live?

For I wish you more than I
Ever knew of glorious deed,
Though no rapture passed me by
That an eager heart could heed,
Though I followed heights and sought
Things the sequel never brought:

Wild and perilous holy things
Flaming with a martyr's blood,
And the joy that laughs and sings
Where a foe must be withstood,
Joy of headlong happy chance
Leading on the battle dance.

But I found no enemy,
No man in a world of wrong.
That Christ's word of charity
Did not render clean and strong—
Who was I to judge my kind,
Blindest groper of the blind?

God to you may give the sight
And the clear undoubting strength,
Wars to knit for single right,
Freedom's war to knit at length,
And to win, through wrath and strife,
To the sequel of my life.

But for you, so small and young,
Born on St. Cecilia's Day,
I in more harmonious song
Now for nearer joys should pray—
Simple joys: the natural growth
Of your childhood and your youth,
Courage, innocence, and truth:

These for you, so small and young,
In your hand and heart and tongue.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

James Starkey was born in Dublin in 1878. Writing under the pseudonym of Seumas O'Sullivan, he contributed a great variety of prose and verse to various Irish papers. His reputation as a poet began with his appearance in *New Songs*, edited by George Russell ("Æ"). Later, he published *The Twilight People* (1905), *The Earth Lover* (1909), *Poems* (1912), and *Mud and Purple*

(1918). His *Collected Poems* carry an Introduction by Padraic Colum, a selection in *The Bibelot* having been prefaced by "Æ."

PRAISE

Dear, they are praising your beauty,
The grass and the sky:
The sky in a silence of wonder,
The grass in a sigh.

I too would sing for your praising,
Dearest, had I
Speech as the whispering grass,
Or the silent sky.

These have an art for the praising
Beauty so high.
Sweet, you are praised in a silence,
Sung in a sigh.

CREDO

I cannot pray, as Christians used to pray,
Before the holy Rood,
Nor on the sacred mysteries seven, as they,
Believing brood.

Nor can I say with those whom pride makes sure,
Our hearts emancipate
Have scorn of ancient symbols that endure
Out-lasting late.

For I have seen Lord Angus in the trees,
And bowing heard
When Spring a lover whispered in their leaves
The living word.

Have known the sun, the wind's sweet agency
And the soft rains that bless
And lead the year through colored pageantry
To fruitfulness.

Yea, by the outstretched hands, the dimming sight,
The piercèd side,
Known when in every bough that shrinks from light
The Lord of life has died.

EDWARD THOMAS

(Philip) Edward Thomas was born in 1878 and educated at Lincoln College, Oxford. For many years before he turned to verse, Thomas had a large following as a critic and author of travel books, fatiguing biographies, tired pot-boilers. Hating his hack-work, yet unable to get free of it, he had so repressed his creative ability that he had grown doubtful concerning his own power. It needed something foreign to stir and animate what was native in him. So when Robert Frost, the New England poet, went abroad in 1912 for two years and became an intimate of Thomas's, the English critic began to write poetry.

His verse was first published under the pseudonym of "Edward Eastaway" and immediately attracted the attention of a small circle, but (as was the case with his American preceptor) editors were slow to recognize the distinction of his rusticities. Loving, like Frost, the *minutiae* of existence, the quaint and casual turn of ordinary life, he caught the magic of the English countryside in its unpoeticized quietude. Many of his poems are full of a slow, sad contemplation of life and a reflection of its brave futility. It is not exactly disillusion; it is rather an absence of illusion. *Poems* (1917), dedicated to Robert Frost, is full of Thomas's fidelity to little things, things as unglorified as the unfreezing of the "rock-like mud," a child's path, a list of quaint-sounding villages, birds' nests uncovered by the autumn wind, dusty nettles. Whatever the subject, the lines glow with a deep and almost abject reverence for the soil.

Thomas was killed at Arras at an observatory outpost, ironically enough, on Easter Monday, 1917. *Last Poems* (published posthumously in 1919) has less of Frost's idiom (apparent in such poems as "Fifty Faggots," "Tall Nettles," "Haymaking") and more of Thomas's darkening concern. Faithful to a beauty unseen or scorned by others, his heart "floats through the window to a tree down in the misting, quiet vale:

Not like a peewit that returns to wail
For something it has lost, but like a dove
That slants unswerving to its home and love.
There I find my rest, and through the dark air
Flies what yet lives in me. Beauty is there.

This poetry is a constant search for neglected loveliness: the vortex in an eddy of dead leaves, the dying sun in a fading sunflower, the sedgewater's pipe, a music of songlessness:

> Song that lacks all words, all melody,
> All sweetness almost, was dearer to me then
> Than sweetest voice that sings in tune sweet words.

Collected Poems, a richly inclusive volume with an Introduction by Walter De la Mare, was published in 1929. Thomas must be reckoned among the most natural—and most English—of nature poets. As De la Mare wrote, "When Edward Thomas was killed in Flanders, a mirror of England was shattered of so pure a crystal that a clearer and tenderer reflection can be found no otherwhere than in these poems." Behind the accuracy of observation there is an emotional tensity, a vision of things seen "not with but through the eye."

TALL NETTLES

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plow
Long worn out, and the roller made of stone:
Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:
As well as any bloom upon a flower
I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

IF I SHOULD EVER BY CHANCE

If I should ever by chance grow rich
I'll buy Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,
Roses, Pyrgo, and Lapwater,
And let them all to my elder daughter.
The rent I shall ask of her will be only
Each year's first violets, white and lonely,
The first primroses and orchises—
She must find them before I do, that is.
But if she finds a blossom on furze
Without rent they shall all for ever be hers,
Codham, Cockridden, and Childerditch,
Roses, Pyrgo and Lapwater,—
I shall give them all to my elder daughter.

COCK-CROW

Out of the wood of thoughts that grows by night
To be cut down by the sharp ax of light,—
Out of the night, two cocks together crow,
Cleaving the darkness with a silver blow:
And bright before my eyes twin trumpeters stand,
Heralds of splendor, one at either hand,
Each facing each as in a coat of arms:—
The milkers lace their boots up at the farms.

THE PENNY WHISTLE

The new moon hangs like an ivory bugle
In the naked frosty blue;
And the ghylls of the forest, already blackened
By Winter, are blackened anew.

The brooks that cut up and increase the forest,
As if they had never known
The sun, are roaring with black hollow voices
Betwixt rage and a moan.

But still the caravan-hut by the hollies
Like a kingfisher gleams between;
Round the mossed old hearths of the charcoal-burners,
First primroses ask to be seen.

The charcoal-burners are black, but their linen
Blows white on the line;
And white the letter the girl is reading
Under that crescent fine:

And her brother who hides apart in a thicket,
Slowly and surely playing
On a whistle an olden nursery melody,
Says far more than I am saying.

THE TRUMPET

Rise up, rise up,
And, as the trumpet blowing
Chases the dreams of men,
As the dawn glowing
The stars that left unlit
The land and water,
Rise up and scatter
The dew that covers
The print of last night's lovers—
Scatter it, scatter it!

While you are listening
To the clear horn,
Forget, men, everything
On this earth newborn,
Except that it is lovelier
Than any mysteries.
Open your eyes to the air
That has washed the eyes of stars
Through all the dewy night:
Up with the light,
To the old wars;
Arise, arise!

DIGGING

Today I think
Only with scents,—scents dead leaves yield,
And bracken and wild carrot's seed,
And the square mustard field;

Odors that rise
When the spade wounds the root of a tree,
Rose, currant, raspberry, or goutweed,
Rhubarb or celery;

The smoke's smell, too,
Flowing from where a bonfire burns
The dead, the waste, the dangerous,
And all to sweetness turns.

It is enough
To smell, to crumble the dark earth,
While the robin sings over again
Sad songs of Autumn mirth.

OUT IN THE DARK

Out in the dark over the snow
The fallow fawns invisible go
With the fallow doe;
And the winds blow
Fast as the stars are slow.

Stealthily the dark haunts round
And, when a lamp goes, without sound
At a swifter bound
Than the swiftest hound,
Arrives, and all else is drowned;

And I and star and wind and deer,
Are in the dark together,—near,
Yet far,—and fear
Drums on my ear
In that sage company drear.

How weak and little is the light,
All the universe of sight,
Love and delight,
Before the might,
If you love it not, of night.

GALLOWS

There was a weasel lived in the sun
With all his family,
Till a keeper shot him with his gun
And hung him up on a tree,
Where he swings in the wind and the rain
In the sun and in the snow,
Without pleasure, without pain
On the dead oak tree bough.

There was a crow who was no sleeper,
But a thief and a murderer
Till a very late hour; and this keeper
Made him one of the things that were,
To hang and flap in the rain and wind,
In the sun and in the snow.
There are no more sins to be sinned
On the dead oak tree bough.

There was a magpie, too,
Had a long tongue and a long tail;
He could both talk and do—
But what did that avail?
He, too, flaps in the wind and rain
Alongside weasel and crow.
Without pleasure, without pain,
On the dead oak tree bough.

And many other beasts
And birds, skin, bone and feather,
Have been taken from their feasts
And hung up there together,
To swing and have endless leisure
In the sun and in the snow,
Without pain, without pleasure,
On the dead oak tree bough.

FIFTY FAGGOTS

There they stand, on their ends, the fifty faggots
That once were underwood of hazel and ash
In Jenny Pink's copse. Now, by the hedge
Close packed they make a thicket fancy alone
Can creep through with the mouse and wren. Next Spring
A blackbird or a robin will nest there,
Accustomed to them, thinking they will remain
Whatever is forever to a bird:
This Spring it is too late; the swift has come.
'Twas a hot day for carrying them up:
Better they will never warm me, though they must

Light several Winters' fires. Before they are done
The war will have ended, many other things
Have ended, maybe, that I can no more
Foresee or more control than robin and wren.

HAYMAKING

After night's slumber far away had rolled,
The fiery day had a sweet kernel of cold,
And in the perfect blue the clouds uncurled,
Like the first gods before they made the world
And misery, swimming the stormless sea
In beauty and in divine gayety.
The smooth white empty road was lightly strewn
With leaves—the holly's Autumn falls in June—
And fir cones standing stiff up in the heat.
The mill-foot water tumbled white and lit
With tossing crystals, happier than any crowd
Of children pouring out of school aloud.
And in the little thickets where a sleeper
For ever might lie lost, the nettle-creeper
And garden warbler sang unceasingly;
While over them shrill shrieked in his fierce glee
The swift with wings and tail as sharp and narrow
As if the bow had flown off with the arrow.
Only the scent of woodbine and hay new-mown
Traveled the road. In the field sloping down,
Park-like to where its willows showed the brook,
Haymakers rested. The tosser lay forsook
Out in the sun; and the long wagon stood
Without its team, it seemed it never would
Move from the shadow of that single yew.
The team, as still, until their task was due,
Beside the laborers enjoyed the shade
That three squat oaks mid field together made
Upon a circle of grass and weed uncut,
And on the hollow, once a chalk-pit, but
Now brimmed with nut and elder-flower so clean.
The men leaned on their rakes, about to begin,
But still. And all were silent. All was old,
This morning time, with a great age untold,

Older than Clare and Cobbett, Morland and Crome,
Than, at the field's far edge, the farmer's home,
A white house crouched at the foot of a great tree.
Under the heavens that know not what years be
The men, the beasts, the trees, the implements
Uttered even what they will in times far hence—
All of us gone out of the reach of change—
Immortal in a picture of an old grange.

JOHN MASEFIELD

John Masefield was born June 1, 1878, in Ledbury, Herefordshire. Although the son of a lawyer, he went to sea at an early age and became a wanderer for several years. At one time, in 1895, to be exact, he worked for a few months as a sort of third assistant barkeeper in Luke O'Connor's saloon, the Columbia Hotel, in New York City. The place is still there on the corner of Sixth and Greenwich Avenues. In 1897, he returned to England where he made friends with Synge in London, living, for a time, in Bloomsbury. The Royal Society of Literature awarded him the Edmond de Polignac prize for poetry in 1912. During the war, Masefield made a lecture tour in America in 1916. Since that time, he has had his home at Boar's Hill, near Oxford.

The results of his wanderings showed in his early works, *Salt-Water Ballads* (1902), *Ballads* (1903), frank, often crude but always rightly measured poems of sailors written in their own dialect, and *A Mainsail Haul* (1905), a collection of short nautical stories. In these books Masefield possibly overemphasized passion and brutality, yet, underneath the violence, he captured that highly colored realism which is the poetry of life. But all of Masefield is not fortissimo. He has sounded notes as lightly satiric as "Cargoes," as solemnly restrained as "The Choice," as quietly unaffected—and affecting—as "C. L. M.," that universal tribute.

It was not until he published *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911) that he became famous. Followed quickly by those remarkable long narrative poems, *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), and *The Daffodil Fields* (1913), all of these works vibrate with a blend of physical exulting and spiritual exaltation that is so striking, and so typical of Masefield. Their very rudeness is lifted to a plane of religious intensity. (See Preface.) Pictorially, Masefield is even more telling. The finest moment in *The Widow in the Bye Street* is the portrayal of the mother alone in her cottage; the public-house scene and the passage describing

the birds following the plow are the most intense touches in *The Everlasting Mercy*. Nothing more vigorous or contagious than the description of the storm at sea in *Dauber* has appeared in current literature; "The Wanderer" is perhaps the most persuasive sea-poem in modern English.

The war, in which Masefield served with the Red Cross in France and on the Gallipoli peninsula (of which campaign he wrote a study for the government), softened his style; *Good Friday and Other Poems* (1916) is as restrained and dignified a collection as that of any of his contemporaries.

Reynard the Fox (1919) and *Right Royal* (1920) attempt a return to the early vigor. But the attempt is too evident; a sense of strain pervades the too-packed, too-rapidly propelled stanzas. Influenced by Chaucer (Masefield says he first took to writing after reading the *Parliament of Fowls*) they are marred by their excesses. "There is," says Middleton Murry, speaking of the former, "in Chaucer, a naturalness, a lack of emphasis, a confidence that the object will not fail to make its own impression, beside which Mr. Masefield's demonstration and underlining seem almost *malsain* . . . tainted by the desperate *bergerie* of the Georgian era. Chaucer is at home with his speech and at home with his world; by his side Mr. Masefield seems nervous and uncertain about both." But though the Chaucerian influence is obvious, it is not wholly a handicap to Masefield; it stimulates him to overcome a nostalgia, roused (if overanimated) by the English countryside.

Compared to his almost frenetic verse, Masefield's fictions are conventional. The later novels gather speed, but even *Sard Harker* (1924), *Odtaa* (1926) and *The Midnight Folk* (1927), for all their surface differences, are little more than perfunctory. His books for boys are scarcely more enlivening. His plays come nearer the heart of the poet, although the influence of Synge, Shakespeare and Hardy can be traced. The early dramas, unlike the early novels, are his best: *The Tragedy of Nan* (1909), *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great* (1910) and *The Faithful* (1915) are far superior to his adaptations of Racine, his revamping of *Tristan and Isolt* (1927) or the dignified but dull *Coming of Christ* (1928).

Among Masefield's essays, *William Shakespeare* (1911) remains his most creative critique, the author returning to the subject in *Shakespeare and Spiritual Life* (1924).

Collected Poems (1923) is, both in quantity and quality, a remarkable showing for a poet in his mid-forties. It was followed by *Midsummer Night* (1928) in which Masefield returned, with a fine narrative sweep, to his best stride and his true manner.

Following the death of Bridges, Masefield was appointed Poet Laureate in 1930.

A CONSECRATION

Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged charioteers
Riding triumphantly laureled to lap the fat of the years,—
Rather the scorned—the rejected—the men hemmed in with the spears;

The men of the tattered battalion which fights till it dies,
Dazed with the dust of the battle, the din and the cries.
The men with the broken heads and the blood running into their eyes.

Not the be-medaled Commander, beloved of the throne,
Riding cock-horse to parade when the bugles are blown,
But the lads who carried the koppie and cannot be known.

Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load.

The sailor, the stoker of steamers, the man with the clout,
The chantyman bent at the halliards putting a tune to the shout,
The drowsy man at the wheel and the tired look-out.

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth;—
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth!

Theirs be the music, the color, the glory, the gold;
Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of mold.
Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the cold—
Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tales be told.

AMEN.

SEA-FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,

And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life.
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

A WANDERER'S SONG

A wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels,
I am tired of brick and stone and rumbling wagon-wheels;
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limits of the land,
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand.

Oh I'll be going, leaving the noises of the street,
To where a lifting foresail-foot is yanking at the sheet;
To a windy, tossing anchorage where yawls and ketches ride,
Oh I'll be going, going, until I meet the tide.

And first I'll hear the sea-wind, the mewing of the gulls,
The clucking, sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls,
The songs at the capstan in the hooker warping out,
And then the heart of me'll know I'm there or thereabout.

Oh I am sick of brick and stone, the heart of me is sick,
For windy green, unquiet sea, the realm of Moby Dick;
And I'll be going, going, from the roaring of the wheels,
For a wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels.

SORROW OF MYDATH

Weary the cry of the wind is, weary the sea,
Weary the heart and the mind and the body of me.

Would I were out of it, done with it, would I could be
A white gull crying along the desolate sands!

Outcast, derelict soul in a body accurst,
Standing drenched with the spindrift, standing athirst,
For the cool green waves of death to arise and burst
In a tide of quiet for me on the desolate sands!

Would that the waves and the long white hair of the spray
Would gather in splendid terror and blot me away
To the sunless place of the wrecks where the waters sway
Gently, dreamily, quietly over desolate sands!

TOMORROW

Oh yesterday the cutting edge drank thirstily and deep,
The upland outlaws ringed us in and herded us as sheep,
They drove us from the stricken field and bayed us into keep;
But tomorrow,
By the living God, we'll try the game again!

Oh yesterday our little troop was ridden through and through,
Our swaying, tattered pennons fled, a broken, beaten few,
And all a summer afternoon they hunted us and slew;
But tomorrow,
By the living God, we'll try the game again!

And here upon the turret-top the bale-fire glowers red,
The wake-lights burn and drip about our hacked, disfigured dead,
And many a broken heart is here and many a broken head;
But tomorrow,
By the living God, we'll try the game again!

ROUNDING THE HORN

(*From "Dauber"*)

Then came the cry of "Call all hands on deck!"
The Dauber knew its meaning; it was come:
Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck,
And crumples steel and smites the strong man dumb.

Down clattered flying kites and staysails; some
Sang out in quick, high calls: the fair-leads skirled,
And from the south-west came the end of the world . . .

"Lay out!" the Bosun yelled. The Dauber laid
Out on the yard, gripping the yard, and feeling
Sick at the mighty space of air displayed
Below his feet, where mewing birds were wheeling.
A giddy fear was on him; he was reeling.
He bit his lip half through, clutching the jack.
A cold sweat glued the shirt upon his back.

The yard was shaking, for a brace was loose.
He felt that he would fall; he clutched, he bent,
Clammy with natural terror to the shoes
While idiotic promptings came and went.
Snow fluttered on a wind-flaw and was spent;
He saw the water darken. Some one yelled,
"Frap it; don't stay to furl! Hold on!" He held.

Darkness came down—half darkness—in a whirl;
The sky went out, the waters disappeared.
He felt a shocking pressure of blowing hurl
The ship upon her side. The darkness speared
At her with wind; she staggered, she careered;
Then down she lay. The Dauber felt her go,
He saw her yard tilt downwards. Then the snow

Whirled all about—dense, multitudinous, cold—
Mixed with the wind's one devilish thrust and shriek,
Which whiffled out men's tears, defeated, took hold,
Flattening the flying drift against the cheek.
The yards buckled and bent, man could not speak.
The ship lay on her broadside; the wind's sound
Had devilish malice at having got her downed.

How long the gale had blown he could not tell,
Only the world had changed, his life had died.
A moment now was everlasting hell.
Nature an onslaught from the weather side,
A withering rush of death, a frost that cried,

Shrieked, till he withered at the heart; a hail
Plastered his oilskins with an icy mail. . . .

"Up!" yelled the Bosun; "up and clear the wreck!"
The Dauber followed where he led; below
He caught one giddy glimpsing of the deck
Filled with white water, as though heaped with snow.
He saw the streamers of the rigging blow
Straight out like pennons from the splintered mast,
Then, all sense dimmed, all was an icy blast.

Roaring from nether hell and filled with ice,
Roaring and crashing on the jerking stage,
An utter bridle given to utter vice,
Limitless power mad with endless rage
Withering the soul; a minute seemed an age.
He clutched and hacked at ropes, at rags of sail,
Thinking that comfort was a fairy tale,

Told long ago—long, long ago—long since
Heard of in other lives—imagined, dreamed—
There where the basest beggar was a prince.
To him in torment where the tempest screamed,
Comfort and warmth and ease no longer seemed
Things that a man could know; soul, body, brain,
Knew nothing but the wind, the cold, the pain.

C. L. M.

In the dark womb where I began
My mother's life made me a man.
Through all the months of human birth
Her beauty fed my common earth.
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,
But through the death of some of her.

Down in the darkness of the grave
She cannot see the life she gave.
For all her love, she cannot tell
Whether I use it ill or well,
Nor knock at dusty doors to find
Her beauty dusty in the mind.

If the grave's gates could be undone,
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown. If we should meet,
She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of what she did for me.

What have I done to keep in mind
My debt to her and womankind?
What woman's happier life repays
Her for those months of wretched days?
For all my mouthless body leech'd
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reach'd?

What have I done, or tried, or said
In thanks to that dear woman dead?
Men triumph over women still,
Men trample women's rights at will,
And man's lust roves the world untamed.

. . . . .

O grave, keep shut lest I be shamed.

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke-stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rail, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

CAPTAIN STRATTON'S FANCY

Oh some are fond of red wine, and some are fond of white,
And some are all for dancing in the pale moonlight;
But rum alone's the tipple and the heart's delight
Of the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of Spanish wine, and some are fond of French,
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only for a wench;
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath the bench,
Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are for the lily, and some are for the rose,
But I am for the sugar-cane that in Jamaica grows;
For it's that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,
Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of fiddles and a song well sung,
And some are all for music for to lilt upon the tongue;
But mouths were made for tankards, and for sucking at the bung,
Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

And some are fond of dancing, and some are fond of dice,
And some are all for red lips and pretty lasses' eyes;
But a right Jamaica puncheon is a finer prize
To the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin;
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,
Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go in silken suits,
And there's a mort of wicked rogues that live in good reputes;
So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in my boots,
Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

SONNET

Is there a great green commonwealth of Thought
Which ranks the yearly pageant, and decides
How Summer's royal progress shall be wrought,
By secret stir which in each plant abides?
Does rocking daffodil consent that she,
The snowdrop of wet winters, shall be first?
Does spotted cowslip with the grass agree
To hold her pride before the rattle burst?
And in the hedge what quick agreement goes,
When hawthorn blossoms redden to decay,
That Summer's pride shall come, the Summer's rose,
Before the flower be on the bramble spray?
Or is it, as with us, unresting strife,
And each consent a lucky gasp for life?

ON GROWING OLD

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;
My dog and I are old, too old for roving.
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.
I take the book and gather to the fire,
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute
The clock ticks to my heart. A withered wire,
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your cornland, nor your hill-land, nor your valleys
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.
Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Beauty have pity! for the strong have power,
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower.
Spring-time of man all April in a face.
Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud,
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,

So, from this glittering world with all its fashion,
Its fire, and play of men, its stir, its march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,
Bread to the soul, rain when the summers parch.
Give me but these, and though the darkness close
Even the night will blossom as the rose.

LAUGH AND BE MERRY

Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world with a song,
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.
Laugh, and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden time,
God made Heaven and Earth for joy He took in a rhyme,
Made them, and filled them full with the strong red wine of His mirth,
The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the sky,
Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by,
Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine outpoured
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.
Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my friends.

THE CHOICE

The Kings go by with jeweled crowns;
Their horses gleam, their banners shake, their spears are many.
The sack of many-peopled towns
Is all their dream:
The way they take
Leaves but a ruin in the brake,
And, in the furrow that the plowmen make,
A stampless penny; a tale, a dream.

The Merchants reckon up their gold,
Their letters come, their ships arrive, their freights are glories.
The profits of their treasures sold
They tell and sum;
Their foremen drive
Their servants, starved to half-alive,
Whose labors do but make the earth a hive
Of stinking stories; a tale, a dream.

The Priests are singing in their stalls,
Their singing lifts, their incense burns, their praying clamors;
Yet God is as the sparrow falls,
The ivy drifts;
The votive urns
Are all left void when Fortune turns,
The god is but a marble for the kerns
To break with hammers; a tale, a dream.

O Beauty, let me know again
The green earth cold, the April rain, the quiet waters figuring sky,
The one star risen.
So shall I pass into the feast
Not touched by King, Merchant, or Priest;
Know the red spirit of the beast,
Be the green grain;
Escape from prison.

LORD DUNSANY

Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, Lord Dunsany, the eighteenth Baron of his line, with estates in Meath, Ireland, and in Kent, was born July 24, 1878, and was educated at Eton and Sandhurst. He is best known as an author of fantastic fairy tales and still more fantastic plays. *The Gods of the Mountain* (1911) and *The Golden Doom* (1912) are highly dramatic and intensely poetic. *A Night at an Inn* (1916) is that peculiar novelty, an eerie and plausible melodrama.

Dunsany's prime quality is a highly colored imagination rich in symbolism. This symbolism, part modern, part Oriental, shows itself in situation, in the juxtaposition of the grotesque and the

casual, even in the employment of curious fictitious names. *Five Plays* (1914) and *Plays of Gods and Men* (1917) include the best of Dunsany's one-acters.

After the World War, in which the playwright served as captain in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Dunsany visited America and revised the reissue of his early tales and prose poems collected in his *The Book of Wonder*, originally published in 1912, following this with *The Last Book of Wonder* (1916), *Unhappy Far-off Things* and *The King of Elfland's Daughter* (1924).

Fifty Poems (1930) is marred by too great an amount of occasional verse. Most of it seems the product of a mind whose edge is by no means dull but whose emotions are remembered in too tranquil a tranquillity. But the Dunsany touch is not wholly lacking. "The Watchers," for all its resemblance to De la Mare's "The Listeners," is one of the best moments in the volume, and "Snow on the East Wind" is an apt and imagistic picturing of the dying down of the wind with the coming of snow.

SNOW ON THE EAST WIND

A black horse came to visit us,
  His hooves on the hills drumming
All the way from the Caucasus,
  And was three days coming.

On his back was a lady light,
  And cruelly did she ride him.
He dropped dead at our doors by night
  As she softly stepped from astride him.

SONGS FROM AN EVIL WOOD

I

There is no wrath in the stars,
  They do not rage in the sky;
I look from the evil wood
  And find myself wondering why.

Why do they not scream out
  And grapple star against star,
Seeking for blood in the wood
  As all things round me are?

They do not glare like the sky
  Or flash like the deeps of the wood;
But they shine softly on
  In their sacred solitude.

To their high, happy haunts
  Silence from us has flown,
She whom we loved of old
  And know it now she is gone.

When will she come again,
  Though for one second only?
She whom we loved is gone
  And the whole world is lonely.

II

Somewhere lost in the haze
  The sun goes down in the cold,
And birds in this evil wood
  Chirrup home as of old;

Chirrup, stir and are still,
  On the high twigs frozen and thin.
There is no more noise of them now,
  And the long night sets in.

Of all the wonderful things
  That I have seen in the wood
I marvel most at the birds
  And their wonderful quietude.

For a giant smites with his club
  All day the tops of the hill,
Sometimes he rests at night,
  Oftener he beats them still.

And a dwarf with a grim black mane
  Raps with repeated rage
All night in the valley below
  On the wooden walls of his cage.

And the elder giants come
  Sometimes, tramping from far
Through the weird and flickering light
  Made by an earthly star.

And the giant with his club,
  And the dwarf with rage in his breath,
And the elder giants from far,
  They are all the children of Death.

They are all abroad tonight
  And are breaking the hills with their brood,—
And the birds are all asleep
  Even in Plug Street Wood!

III

I met with Death in his country,
  With his scythe and his hollow eye
Walking the roads of Belgium.
  I looked and he passed me by.

Since he passed me by in Plug Street,
  In the wood of the evil name,
I shall not now lie with the heroes,
  I shall not share their fame;

I shall never be as they are,
  A name in the lands of the Free,
Since I looked on Death in Flanders
  And he did not look at me.

HAROLD MONRO

Harold Monro was born in Brussels in 1879 and educated at Caius College, Cambridge. He describes himself as "author, publisher, editor and book-seller." Monro founded The Poetry Bookshop in London in 1912, a unique establishment having as its

object a practical relation between poetry and the public, and keeping in stock nothing but poetry, the drama, and books connected with these subjects. His quarterly, *Poetry and Drama* (discontinued during the war and revived in 1919 as *The Chapbook*), was in a sense the organ of the younger men; and his shop, in which he lived for the last twenty years of his life except while he was in the army, became a literary center. He died in 1931.

Monro's poetry depicts the play between the world of reality and the limbo of fantasy. *Before Dawn* (1911) has little of his peculiar mysticism, but *Children of Love* (1914), *Trees* (1915) and *Strange Meetings* (1917) present, with indubitable originality, the relation of man, not only to the earth he rose from, but to the inanimate things among which he moves. Even the most whimsical of this poet's concepts disclose an emotional intensity beneath its skillful rhythms. Monro's kettles are as animated as his cats; his machines, domestic furniture, ordinary interiors are both surprising and natural—surprising in the revelation of what might well be their "inner selves," natural in the way their speech is communicated.

Monro has been criticized as being a poet by intention, but not a singer by intuition. Defending certain of the more determined "modernist" poets—and, by implication, himself—Monro has written, "It will be no use to say that their poetry 'does not sing.' It is not meant to. The word *Song* has been abandoned and swept out, with *Ode*, *Sonnet*, *Quatrain*, and other similar verbal lumber. The test of intellect is more important to them than tests of prosody, or tradition. The passing event and its effect on the mind is everything to them. . . . Thus they think in terms of the whole poem rather than of the single line, and thus they are often unquotable except in *extenso*." While this is interesting (and partially true) Monro's own poetry is at its best when intellect is subservient to imagination.

Real Property (1922) represents a further advance. Although Monro has not lost his whimsical appraisal of "still life," the note is graver, the implications larger. Some of the poems, as Monro states in a prefatory note, are "tainted with slight Georgian affectations." But such verses as the metaphysical "Earthliness" (too long for quotation) and the simpler poems of Part Two, three of which are reprinted in the group below, mark this poet as one of the most original though, undeservedly, one of the least popular creators of the period.

The Earth for Sale (1928) is a continuation and extension of the more somber speculations. Besides his poetry, Monro is the author of *Some Contemporary Poets* (1920), a set of sharply critical estimates.

EVERY THING

Since man has been articulate,
Mechanical, improvidently wise
(Servant of Fate),
He has not understood the little cries
And foreign conversations of the small
Delightful creatures that have followed him
Not far behind;
Has failed to hear the sympathetic call
Of Crockery and Cutlery, those kind
Reposeful Teraphim
Of his domestic happiness; the Stool
He sat on, or the Door he entered through:
He has not thanked them, overbearing fool!
What is he coming to?

But you should listen to the talk of these.
Honest they are, and patient they have kept;
Served him without his Thank you or his Please . . .
I often heard
The gentle Bed, a sigh between each word,
Murmuring, before I slept.
The Candle, as I blew it, cried aloud,
Then bowed,
And in a smoky argument
Into the darkness went.
The Kettle puffed a tentacle of breath:—
"Pooh! I have boiled his water, I don't know
Why; and he always says I boil too slow.
He never calls me 'Sukie, dear,' and oh,
I wonder why I squander my desire
Sitting submissive on his kitchen fire."

Now the old Copper Basin suddenly
Rattled and tumbled from the shelf,
Bumping and crying: "I can fall by myself;
Without a woman's hand

To patronize and coax and flatter me,
I understand
The lean and poise of gravitable land."
It gave a raucous and tumultuous shout,
Twisted itself convulsively about,
Rested upon the floor, and, while I stare,
It stares and grins at me.

The old impetuous Gas above my head
Begins irascibly to flare and fret,
Wheezing into its epileptic jet,
Reminding me I ought to go to bed.

The rafters creak; an Empty-Cupboard door
Swings open; now a wild Plank of the floor
Breaks from its joist, and leaps behind my foot.
Down from the chimney, half a pound of Soot
Tumbles and lies, and shakes itself again.
The Putty cracks against the window-pane.
A piece of Paper in the basket shoves
Another piece, and toward the bottom moves.
My independent Pencil, while I write,
Breaks at the point: the ruminating Clock
Stirs all its body and begins to rock,
Warning the waiting presence of the Night.
Strikes the dead hour, and tumbles to the plain
Ticking of ordinary work again.

You do well to remind me, and I praise
Your strangely individual foreign ways.
You call me from myself to recognize
Companionship in your unselfish eyes.
I want your dear acquaintances, although
I pass you arrogantly over, throw
Your lovely sounds, and squander them along
My busy days. I'll do you no more wrong.

Purr for me, Sukie, like a faithful cat.
You, my well-trampled Boots, and you, my Hat,
Remain my friends: I feel, though I don't speak,
Your touch grow kindlier from week to week.

It well becomes our mutual happiness
To go toward the same end more or less.
There is not much dissimilarity,
Not much to choose, I know it well, in fine,
Between the purposes of you and me,
And your eventual Rubbish Heap, and mine.

CITY-STORM

The heavy sounds are over-sweet
That droop above the hooded street,
At any moment ripe to fall and lie,
And when the Wind will swagger up the town
They'll bend a moment, then will fly
All clattering down.

Troupes come and go of urchin breeze:
They flick your face or smack the trees,
Then round the corner spin and leap
With whistling cries,
Rake their rubbish in a heap
And throw it in your eyes.

(Much preparation of the earth and air
Is needed everywhere
Before that first large drop of rain can fall.)

Smells of the Sea, or inland Grass,
Come staring through the town and pass.
Brilliant old Memories drive in state
Along the way, but cannot wait;
And many a large unusual bird
Hovers across the sky, half-heard.

But listen. It is He;
At last he comes:
Gigantic tyrant panting through the street,
Slamming the windows of our little homes,
Banging the doors, knocking the chimneys down.
Oh, his loud tramp: how scornfully he can meet
Great citizens, and lash them with his sleet!
Everything will be altered in our town.

He'll wipe the film of habit clean away,
While he remains,
His cloak is over everything we do,
And the whole town complains:—

A somber scroll;
An inner room.
A crystal bowl:
Waters of gloom.
Oh, the darkened house—
Into silence creep!
The world is cold.
All people weep.

SOLITUDE

When you have tidied all things for the night,
And while your thoughts are fading to their sleep,
You'll pause a moment in the late firelight,
Too sorrowful to weep.

The large and gentle furniture has stood
In sympathetic silence all the day
With that old kindness of domestic wood;
Nevertheless the haunted room will say:
"Some one must be away."

The little dog rolls over half awake,
Stretches his paws, yawns, looking up at you,
Wags his tail very slightly for your sake,
That you may feel he is unhappy too.

A distant engine whistles, or the floor
Creaks, or the wandering night-wind bangs a door.

Silence is scattered like a broken glass.
The minutes prick their ears and run about,
Then one by one subside again and pass
Sedately in, monotonously out.

You bend your head and wipe away a tear.
Solitude walks one heavy step more near.

CHILDREN OF LOVE

The holy boy
Went from his mother out in the cool of day
Over the sun-parched fields
And in among the olives shining green and shining gray.

There was no sound,
No smallest voice of any shivering stream.
Poor sinless little boy,
He desired to play, and to sing; he could only sigh and dream.

Suddenly came
Running along to him naked, with curly hair,
That rogue of the lovely world,
That other beautiful child whom the virgin Venus bare.

The holy boy
Gazed with those sad blue eyes that all men know.
Impudent Cupid stood
Panting, holding an arrow and pointing his bow.

("Will you not play?
Jesus, run to him, run to him, swift for our joy.
Is he not holy, like you?
Are you afraid of his arrows, O beautiful dreaming boy?")

And now they stand
Watching one another with timid gaze;
Youth has met youth in the wood,
But holiness will not change its melancholy ways.

Cupid at last
Draws his bow and softly lets fly a dart.
Smile for a moment, sad world!—
It has grazed the white skin and drawn blood from the sorrowful heart.

Now for delight,
Cupid tosses his locks and goes wantonly near;
But the child that was born to the cross
Has let fall on his cheek, for the sadness of life, a compassionate tear.

Marvelous dream!
Cupid has offered his arrows for Jesus to try;
He has offered his bow for the game,
But Jesus went weeping away, and left him there wondering why.

DOG

O little friend, your nose is ready; you sniff,
Asking for that expected walk,
(Your nostrils full of the happy rabbit-whiff)
And almost talk.

And so the moment becomes a moving force;
Coats glide down from their pegs in the humble dark;
You scamper the stairs,
Your body informed with the scent and the track and the mark
Of stoats and weasels, moles and badgers and hares.

We are going *Out*. You know the pitch of the word,
Probing the tone of thought as it comes through fog
And reaches by devious means (half-smelt, half-heard)
The four-legged brain of a walk-ecstatic dog.

Out through the garden your head is already low.
You are going your walk, you know,
And your limbs will draw
Joy from the earth through the touch of your padded paw.

Now, sending a look to us behind,
Who follow slowly the track of your lovely play,
You fetch our bodies forward away from mind
Into the light and fun of your useless day.

. . . . . .

Thus, for your walk, we took ourselves, and went
Out by the hedge, and tree, to the open ground.
You ran, in delightful strata of wafted scent,
Over the hill without seeing the view;
Beauty is hinted through primitive smells to you:
And that ultimate Beauty you track is but rarely found.

. . . . . .

Home . . . and further joy will be waiting there:
Supper full of the lovely taste of bone,
You lift up your nose again, and sniff, and stare
For the rapture known
Of the quick wild gorge of food, then the still lie-down;
While your people will talk above you in the light
Of candles, and your dreams will merge and drown
Into the bed-delicious hours of night.

MAN CARRYING BALE

The tough hand closes gently on the load;
  Out of the mind a voice
Calls "Lift!" and the arms, remembering well their work,
  Lengthen and pause for help.
Then a slow ripple flows along the body,
While all the muscles call to one another:
  "Lift!" and the bulging bale
  Floats like a butterfly in June.

So moved the earliest carrier of bales,
  And the same watchful sun
Glowed through his body feeding it with light.
  So will the last one move,
And halt, and dip his head, and lay his load
Down, and the muscles will relax and tremble . . .
  Earth, you designed your man
Beautiful both in labor and repose.

THE NIGHTINGALE NEAR THE HOUSE

Here is the soundless cypress on the lawn:
It listens, listens. Taller trees beyond
Listen. The moon at the unruffled pond
    Stares. And you sing, you sing.

That star-enchanted song falls through the air
From lawn to lawn down terraces of sound,
Darts in white arrows on the shadowed ground;
    And all the night you sing.

My dreams are flowers to which you are a bee
As all night long I listen, and my brain
Receives your song; then loses it again
In moonlight on the lawn.

Now is your voice a marble high and white,
Then like a mist on fields of paradise,
Now is a raging fire, then is like ice,
Then breaks, and it is dawn.

W. W. GIBSON

W(ilfrid) W(ilson) Gibson was born in 1880 at Hexham, Northumberland and, by his forty-eighth year, was the author of some nineteen books of poems and five volumes of poetic plays and dialogues. The first five or six of these (see Preface) were pseudo-Tennysonian; imitative in manner and sentimentally romantic in tone. Their titles give the key: *Urlyn the Harper* (1902), *The Queen's Vigil* (1902), *The Golden Helm* (1903), *The Nets of Love* (1905).

With *Daily Bread* (1910), *Fires* (1912) and *Borderlands* (1914) Gibson executed a complete right-about-face and, with dramatic brevity, wrote a series of poems mirroring the dreams, pursuits and fears of common humanity. *Thoroughfares* (1914) marks an advance in technique and power. And though in *Livelihood* (1917) Gibson seems to be theatricalizing and merely exploiting his working-people, several of his later lyrics recapture the veracity of such memorable poems as "The Old Man," "The Stone" and "The Machine." *Hill-Tracks* (1918) attempts to hold (as Thomas actually did hold) the beauty of village-names through the glamour of the English countryside. *Neighbours* (1920) again takes up the strain of a somewhat too conscious poeticizing of the casual.

Gibson's later work suffers from his facility; a thinning out of power, even of feeling, is evident in *Krindlesyke* (1922), *Kestrel Edge* (1924) and *I Heard a Sailor* (1925). The best of Gibson is in the first *Collected Poems* (1923), a further *Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, having been published in 1926.

PRELUDE

As one, at midnight, wakened by the call
Of golden-plovers in their seaward flight,
Who lies and listens, as the clear notes fall
Through tingling silence of the frosty night—

Who lies and listens, till the last note fails,
And then, in fancy, faring with the flock
Far over slumbering hills and dreaming dales,
Soon hears the surges break on reef and rock;
And, hearkening, till all sense of self is drowned
Within the mightier music of the deep,
No more remembers the sweet piping sound
That startled him from dull, undreaming sleep;
So I, first waking from oblivion, heard,
With heart that kindled to the call of song,
The voice of young life, fluting like a bird,
And echoed that light lilting; till, ere long,
Lured onward by that happy, singing-flight,
I caught the stormy summons of the sea,
And dared the restless deeps that, day and night,
Surge with the life-song of humanity.

THE STONE

"And will you cut a stone for him,
To set above his head?
And will you cut a stone for him—
A stone for him?" she said.

Three days before, a splintered rock
Had struck her lover dead—
Had struck him in the quarry dead,
Where, careless of the warning call,
He loitered, while the shot was fired—
A lively stripling, brave and tall,
And sure of all his heart desired . . .
A flash, a shock,
A rumbling fall . . .
And, broken 'neath the broken rock,
A lifeless heap, with face of clay;
And still as any stone he lay,
With eyes that saw the end of all.

I went to break the news to her;
And I could hear my own heart beat
With dread of what my lips might say

But, some poor fool had sped before;
And flinging wide her father's door,
Had blurted out the news to her,
Had struck her lover dead for her,
Had struck the girl's heart dead in her,
Had struck life lifeless, at a word,
And dropped it at her feet:
Then hurried on his witless way,
Scarce knowing she had heard.

And when I came, she stood alone,
A woman turned to stone:
And, though no word at all she said,
I knew that all was known.
Because her heart was dead,
She did not sigh nor moan,
His mother wept:
She could not weep.
Her lover slept:
She could not sleep.
Three days, three nights,
She did not stir:
Three days, three nights,
Were one to her,
Who never closed her eyes
From sunset to sunrise,
From dawn to evenfall:
Her tearless, staring eyes,
That seeing naught, saw all.

The fourth night when I came from work,
I found her at my door.
"And will you cut a stone for him?"
She said: and spoke no more:
But followed me, as I went in,
And sank upon a chair;
And fixed her gray eyes on my face,
With still, unseeing stare.
And, as she waited patiently,
I could not bear to feel
Those still, gray eyes that followed me,

Those eyes that plucked the heart from me,
Those eyes that sucked the breath from me
And curdled the warm blood in me,
Those eyes that cut me to the bone,
And pierced my marrow like cold steel.

And so I rose, and sought a stone;
And cut it, smooth and square:
And, as I worked, she sat and watched,
Beside me, in her chair.
Night after night, by candlelight,
I cut her lover's name:
Night after night, so still and white,
And like a ghost she came;
And sat beside me in her chair;
And watched with eyes aflame.

She eyed each stroke;
And hardly stirred:
She never spoke
A single word:
And not a sound or murmur broke
The quiet, save the mallet-stroke.

With still eyes ever on my hands,
With eyes that seemed to burn my hands,
My wincing, overwearied hands,
She watched, with bloodless lips apart,
And silent, indrawn breath:
And every stroke my chisel cut,
Death cut still deeper in her heart:
The two of us were chiseling,
Together, I and death.

And when at length the job was done,
And I had laid the mallet by,
As if, at last, her peace were won,
She breathed his name; and, with a sigh,
Passed slowly through the open door:
And never crossed my threshold more.

Next night I labored late, alone,
To cut her name upon the stone.

SIGHT

By the lamplit stall I loitered, feasting my eyes
On colors ripe and rich for the heart's desire—
Tomatoes, redder than Krakatoa's fire,
Oranges like old sunsets over Tyre,
And apples golden-green as the glades of Paradise.

And as I lingered, lost in divine delight,
My heart thanked God for the goodly gift of sight
And all youth's lively senses keen and quick . . .
When suddenly, behind me in the night,
I heard the tapping of a blind man's stick.

T. M. KETTLE

T(homas) M. Kettle was born in Artane County, Dublin, in 1880 and was educated at University College, where he won the Gold Medal for Oratory. His extraordinary faculty for grasping an intricate problem and crystallizing it in an epigram, or scoring his adversaries with one bright flash, was apparent even then. He was admitted to the bar in 1905 but soon abandoned the law to devote himself to journalism, which, because of his remarkable style, never remained journalism in his hands. In 1906 he entered politics; in 1910 he was reëlected for East Tyrone. Even his bitterest opponents conceded that Tom Kettle (as he was called by friend and enemy) was the most honorable of fighters; they acknowledged his honesty, courage and devotion to the cause of a United Ireland—and respected his penetrating wit. He once spoke of a Mr. Healy as "a brilliant calamity" and satirized a long winded speaker by saying, "Mr. Long knows a sentence should have a beginning, but he quite forgets it should also have an end."

"An Irish torch-bearer" (so E. B. Osborn calls him), Kettle fell in action at Ginchy, leading his Fusiliers in September, 1916. The uplifted poem to his daughter was written shortly before his death.

TO MY DAUGHTER BETTY, THE GIFT OF GOD

In wiser days, my darling rosebud, blown
To beauty proud as was your mother's prime,
In that desired, delayed, incredible time,
You'll ask why I abandoned you, my own,

And the dear heart that was your baby throne,
To dice with death. And, oh! they'll give you rhyme
And reason: some will call the thing sublime,
And some decry it in a knowing tone.

So here, while the mad guns curse overhead,
And tired men sigh with mud for couch and floor,
Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,
Died not for flag, nor King, nor Emperor,—
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,
And for the secret Scripture of the poor.

ALFRED NOYES

Alfred Noyes was born at Staffordshire, September 16, 1880. He is one of the few contemporary poets who have been fortunate enough to write a kind of poetry that is not only readable but extraordinarily saleable.

His first book, *The Loom of Years* (1902), was published when he was only 22 years old, and *Poems* (1904) intensified the promise of this first publication. Swinburne, grown old and living in retirement, was so struck with Noyes's talent that he had the young poet out to read to him. Unfortunately, Noyes has not developed his gifts as deeply as his admirers expected. His poetry, extremely straightforward and rhythmical, has often degenerated into cheap sentimentalities and cheaper tirades; it has attempted to express programs and profundities far beyond Noyes's power.

What is most appealing about his best verse is its ease and heartiness; this singer's gift lies in the almost personal bond established between the poet and his public. It may be said that people have such a good time reading his vivacious lines because Noyes had such a good time writing them. Rhyme in a thumping rhythm seems to be not merely his trade but his morning exercise. Noyes's own relish quickens glees and catches like *Forty Singing Seamen* (1907), the lusty choruses in *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913), the seemingly inspired nonsense of the earlier *Forest of Wild Thyme* (1905).

The least popular work of Noyes is, as a unified product, his most remarkable performance. It is an epic in twelve books of blank verse, *Drake* (1908), a glowing pageant of the sea and England's drama upon it. It is a spirited echo of the maritime Elizabethans; a vivid and orchestral work interspersed with lyric passages and brisk songs. The companion volume, an attempted

reconstruction of the literary phase of the same period, is less successful; but these *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (which introduce Shakespeare, Marlowe, Drayton, Raleigh, Ben Jonson, and other immortals) are alive and colorful, if somewhat too insistently rollicking and smoothly lilting.

Noyes's eight volumes were assembled in 1913 and published in two books of *Collected Poems*. The third volume of his rapidly accumulating *Collected Poems* appeared in 1920, the fourth in 1927. In 1922 Noyes began *The Torch-Bearers*, "An Epic Trilogy," which was a sort of outline of man's accomplishment rendered in verse and which was cruelly parodied by E. V. Knox in "The Steam-Givers."

Besides his verse, Noyes has written several volumes of prose; *Some Aspects of Modern Poetry* (1924) is a critical study, *The Sun Cure* (1929) is a novel, both volumes being marred by Noyes's petulant and often irrelevant gibes at modern poetry.

Although most of his smooth-running rhymes seemed doomed to rush to an early death—are, in fact, already extinct—Noyes will remain a poet pleasant to read because of his "Sherwood," the lilt of "The Barrel Organ," the galloping "The Highwayman" and a handful of other ballads.

SHERWOOD

Sherwood in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Gray and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake;
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of June:
All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the moon;
Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold:
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs;
Love is in the greenwood: dawn is in the skies;
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden steep:
Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mold,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarter-staff and drinking-can and gray goose-feather;
The dead are coming back again; the years are rolled away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows;
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men;
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day;

Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the *Follow! Follow!* and the boughs begin to crash;
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly;
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by.

Robin! Robin! Robin! All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves:
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

THE BARREL-ORGAN

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it swee
And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pair
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.
And now it's marching onward through the realms of old
romance,
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of France
And now it's prattling softly to the moon.
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that pass:
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colors it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—a dance!—

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)
And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing for London:—

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
In the city as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream
Of the City when the sun sinks low,
Of the organ and the monkey and the many-colored stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem
To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme
And pulses with the sunset-glow?

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses and—they're each of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a laborer that listens to the voices of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and—there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go . . .

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?
All around my gala hat

I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is
I've waited for the May!)
If any one should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is—
My own love, my true love, is coming home today.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady;
While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll find it shady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning meet,
As it dies into the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again;
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain:
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all
The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song:
Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;

Once more the knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance
Till once, once more, the shattered foe
Has whirled into—a dance!

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in summer's wonderland,
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

EPILOGUE

(*From "The Flower of Old Japan"*)

Carol, every violet has
Heaven for a looking-glass!

Every little valley lies
Under many-clouded skies;
Every little cottage stands
Girt about with boundless lands.
Every little glimmering pond
Claims the mighty shores beyond—
Shores no seaman ever hailed,
Seas no ship has ever sailed.

All the shores when day is done
Fade into the setting sun,
So the story tries to teach
More than can be told in speech.

Beauty is a fading flower,
Truth is but a wizard's tower,
Where a solemn death-bell tolls,
And a forest round it rolls.
We have come by curious ways
To the light that holds the days;
We have sought in haunts of fear
For that all-enfolding sphere:
And lo! it was not far, but near.
We have found, O foolish-fond,
The shore that has no shore beyond.

Deep in every heart it lies
With its untranscended skies;
For what heaven should bend above
Hearts that own the heaven of love?

Carol, Carol, we have come
Back to heaven, back to home.

PADRAIC COLUM

Padraic Colum was born at Longford, Ireland (in the same county as Oliver Goldsmith), December 8, 1881, and was educated at the local schools. At twenty he was a member of a group that created the Irish National Theatre, afterwards called The Abbey Theatre.

Colum began as a dramatist with *Broken Soil* (1904), *The Land* (1905), *Thomas Muskerry* (1910), and this early dramatic influence has colored much of his work, his best poetry being in the form of dramatic lyrics. *Wild Earth,* his most quoted collection of verse, first appeared in 1909, and an amplified edition of it was published in America in 1916. Colum himself had come to America (where he has lived ever since) shortly before that date; his *Dramatic Poems* appeared in 1922.

Creatures (1927), utterly different in theme from its predecessors, is held together by the same gift of condensation. Though Colum's animals are less obviously divine than his gods, his treatment of them is no less devotional.

As a recorder, Colum has been equally successful as an autobiographer (*My Irish Year,* 1912), a folk-lorist (*Tales and Legends of Hawaii,* 1924, *The Bright Islands,* 1925) and a deservedly popular adapter of tales for children.

THE PLOWER[1]

Sunset and silence! A man: around him earth savage, earth broken;
Beside him two horses—a plow!

Earth savage, earth broken, the brutes, the dawn man there in the sunset,
And the Plow that is twin to the Sword, that is founder of cities!

[1] For its similarity in subject and difference in treatment, it is interesting to compare this poem with Edwin Markham's "The Man with the Hoe."

"Brute-tamer, plow-maker, earth-breaker! Can'st hear?
"There are ages between us.
"Is it praying you are as you stand there alone in the sunset?
"Surely our sky-born gods can be naught to you, earth child and earth-master?
"Surely your thoughts are of Pan, or of Wotan, or Dana?
"Yet, why give thought to the gods? Has Pan led your brutes where they stumble?
"Has Dana numbed pain of the child-bed, or Wotan put hands to your plow?
"What matter your foolish reply! O man, standing lone and bowed earthward,
"Your task is a day near its close. Give thanks to the night-giving God."

. . . . . .

Slowly the darkness falls, the broken lands blend with the savage;
The brute-tamer stands by the brutes, a head's breadth only above them.
A head's breadth? Aye, but therein is hell's depth, and the height up to heaven,
And the thrones of the gods and their halls, their chariots, purples, and splendors.

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

O, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own—
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

INTERIOR

The little moths are creeping
Across the cottage pane;
On the floor the chickens gather,
And they make talk and complain.

And she sits by the fire
Who has reared so many men;
Her voice is low like the chickens'
With the things she says again.

"The sons that come back do be restless,
They search for the thing to say;
Then they take thought like the swallows,
And the morrow brings them away.

"In the old, old days, upon Innish,
The fields were lucky and bright,
And if you lay down you'd be covered
By the grass of one soft night."

She speaks and the chickens gather,
And they make talk and complain,
While the little moths are creeping
Across the cottage pane.

A DROVER

To Meath of the pastures,
From wet hills by the sea,
Through Leitrim and Longford,
Go my cattle and me.

I hear in the darkness
Their slipping and breathing—
I name them the by-ways
They're to pass without heeding;

Then the wet, winding roads,
Brown bogs with black water;
And my thoughts on white ships
And the King o' Spain's daughter.

Oh! farmer, strong farmer!
You can spend at the fair;
But your face you must turn
To your crops and your care.

And soldiers, red soldiers!
You've seen many lands;
But you walk two by two,
And by captain's commands.

Oh! the smell of the beasts,
The wet wind in the morn;
And the proud and hard earth
Never broken for corn;

And the crowds at the fair,
The herds loosened and blind,
Loud words and dark faces
And the wild blood behind.

(Oh! strong men, with your best
I would strive breast to breast,
I could quiet your herds
With my words, with my words.)

I will bring you my kine,
Where there's grass to the knee;
But you'll think of scant croppings
Harsh with salt of the sea.

WILD ASS

The wild ass lounges, legs struck out
In vagrom unconcern:
The tombs of Achaemenian kings
Are for those hooves to spurn.

And all of rugged Tartary
Lies with him on the ground.
The Tartary that knows no awe
That has nor ban nor bound.

The wild horse from the herd is plucked
To bear a saddle's weight;
The boar is one keeps covert, and
The wolf runs with a mate.

But he's the solitary of space,
Curbless and unbeguiled;
The only being that bears a heart
Not recreant to the wild.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

(*Seosamh MacCathmhaoil*)

Joseph Campbell was born in Belfast in 1881, and is not only a poet but an artist; he made all the illustrations for *The Rushlight* (1906), a volume of his own poems. Writing under the Gaelic form of his name, he has published half a dozen books of verse, the most striking of which is *The Mountainy Singer*, first published in Dublin in 1909.

Judgment (1912), a play in two acts, was followed by a collection of racy poems, *Earth of Cualann* (1917).

I AM THE MOUNTAINY SINGER

I am the mountainy singer—
The voice of the peasant's dream,
The cry of the wind on the wooded hill,
The leap of the fish in the stream.

Quiet and love I sing—
The carn on the mountain crest,
The *cailin* in her lover's arms,
The child at its mother's breast.

Beauty and peace I sing—
The fire on the open hearth,
The *cailleach* spinning at her wheel,
The plow in the broken earth.

Travail and pain I sing—
The bride on the childing bed,
The dark man laboring at his rhymes,
The ewe in the lambing shed.

Sorrow and death I sing—
The canker come on the corn,
The fisher lost in the mountain loch,
The cry at the mouth of morn.

No other life I sing,
For I am sprung of the stock
That broke the hilly land for bread,
And built the nest in the rock!

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
  In a holy place,
So is the beauty
  Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
  Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
  With her travail done,

Her brood gone from her,
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill.

JOHN FREEMAN

John Freeman, born in 1881 in London, published several volumes of pleasantly descriptive verse. His first volume appeared in 1909; since then, his two most distinctive books are *Stone Trees* (1916) and *Memories of Childhood* (1919).

A collected edition of the poems from the previous volumes was published in 1920 under the title *Poems New and Old.* In the same year, Freeman was awarded the Hawthornden prize. He had written a great quantity of love lyrics, but Freeman's landscapes are more distinctive than his subjective pieces. Even his pastorals are too patterned, too perfunctory; instead of being rural they are merely suburban.

The best of Freeman's preceding eleven volumes of poems were gathered in *Collected Poems* (1928). He was also the author of several novels and studies, the most interesting of which is *Herman Melville* (1926).

English Portraits and Essays appeared in 1924, a volume that promised a mature critical faculty, cut off by Freeman's death in 1929.

STONE TREES

Last night a sword-light in the sky
Flashed a swift terror on the dark.
In that sharp light the fields did lie
Naked and stone-like; each tree stood
Like a tranced woman, bound and stark.
Far off the wood
With darkness ridged the riven dark.

And cows astonished stared with fear,
And sheep crept to the knees of cows,
And conies to their burrows slid,
And rooks were still in rigid boughs,
And all things else were still or hid.
From all the wood
Came but the owl's hoot, ghostly, clear.

In that cold trance the earth was held
It seemed an age, or time was nought.
Sure never from that stone-like field
Sprang golden corn, nor from those chill
Gray granite trees was music wrought.
In all the wood
Even the tall poplar hung stone still.

It seemed an age, or time was none . . .
Slowly the earth heaved out of sleep
And shivered, and the trees of stone
Bent and sighed in the gusty wind,
And rain swept as birds flocking sweep.
Far off the wood
Rolled the slow thunders on the wind.

From all the wood came no brave bird,
No song broke through the close-fall'n night,
Nor any sound from cowering herd:
Only a dog's long lonely howl
When from the window poured pale light.
And from the wood
The hoot came ghostly of the owl.

THE FUGITIVE

In the hush of early even
The clouds came flocking over,
Till the last wind fell from heaven
And no bird cried.

Darkly the clouds were flocking,
Shadows moved and deepened,
Then paused; the poplar's rocking
Ceased; the light hung still

Like a painted thing, and deadly.
Then from the cloud's side flickered
Sharp lightning, thrusting madly
At the cowering fields.

Thrice the fierce cloud lighten'd
Down the hill slow thunder trembled;
Day in her cave grew frightened,
Crept away, and died.

THE WAKERS

The joyous morning ran and kissed the grass
And drew his fingers through her sleeping hair,
And cried, "Before thy flowers are well awake
Rise, and the lingering darkness from thee shake.

"Before the daisy and the sorrel buy
Their brightness back from that close-folding night,
Come, and the shadows from thy bosom shake,
Awake from thy thick sleep, awake, awake!"

Then the grass of that mounded meadow stirred
Above the Roman bones that may not stir
Though joyous morning whispered, shouted, sang:
The grass stirred as that happy music rang.

O, what a wondrous rustling everywhere!
The steady shadows shook and thinned and died,
The shining grass flashed brightness back for brightness,
And sleep was gone, and there was heavenly lightness.

As if she had found wings, light as the wind,
The grass flew, bent with the wind, from east to west,
Chased by one wild gray cloud, and flashing all
Her dews for happiness to hear morning call. . . .

But even as I stepped out the brightness dimmed,
I saw the fading edge of all delight.
The sober morning waked the drowsy herds,
And there was the old scolding of the birds.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Lascelles Abercrombie was born in 1881, at Ashton-upon-Mersey, near Manchester. He was educated at Malcolm College and Manchester University. Since then, he has engaged in a variety of professions; teaching literature at the University in Liverpool, and in London.

Like Masefield, Abercrombie gained his reputation rapidly; totally unknown until 1909, upon the publication of *Interludes and Poems*, he was recognized as one of the undoubted metaphysical poets of his period. *Emblems of Love* (1912), the ripest collection of his blank verse dialogues, justified the enthusiasm of his admirers.

Many of Abercrombie's poems, the best of which are too long to quote, are founded on scriptural themes, but his blank verse is biblical neither in mood nor in manner. It is the undercurrent rather than the surface of his verse which moves with a strong religious conviction. Abercrombie's images are daring and brilliant; his lines, sometimes too closely packed, glow with an intensity that is spiritual and yet recognizably human.

As a dramatist, Abercrombie has achieved a series of literary but scarcely popular successes with *Deborah* (1914), *Four Short Plays* (1921) and *Phoenix* (1923), brilliantly written though not eminently actable pieces. His knotted, almost tortured, style presents many difficulties to the performers as well as to audiences; but, once the speech is mastered, a swift intellectuality and a vividly dramatic mind are disclosed.

It is only the superficially dense style which keeps Abercrombie an unpopular, almost an unread, poet. Actually his diction, though thickened, is extraordinarily flexible; his characters, if overburdened with analysis, are vividly imagined; and, as Edward Thomas wrote, "the march or leap or stagger or hesitation of the syllables correspond to varying emotions with thrilling delicacy."

It seems a pity that the poet who conceived the ecstatic action of *The Sale of St. Thomas* (1911), the racing vigor of "Witchcraft: New Style," and the brilliant couplets of "Epilogue," should turn away from poetry. Since 1916, Abercrombie has concerned himself (with the exception of two plays) entirely with prose. Since 1914 he has written no less than six volumes about prosody and the technique of verse, *The Theory of Poetry* (1924) being one of the most illuminating books on the subject.

SONG

(*From "Judith"*)

Balkis was in her marble town,
And shadow over the world came down.
Whiteness of walls, towers and piers,
That all day dazzled eyes to tears,
Turned from being white-golden flame,
And like the deep-sea blue became.

Balkis into her garden went;
Her spirit was in discontent
Like a torch in restless air.
Joylessly she wandered there,
And saw her city's azure white
Lying under the great night,
Beautiful as the memory
Of a worshiping world would be
In the mind of a god, in the hour
When he must kill his outward power;
And, coming to a pool where trees
Grew in double greeneries,
Saw herself, as she went by
The water, walking beautifully,
And saw the stars shine in the glance
Of her eyes, and her own fair countenance
Passing, pale and wonderful,
Across the night that filled the pool.
And cruel was the grief that played
With the queen's spirit; and she said:
"What do I here, reigning alone?
For to be unloved is to be alone.
There is no man in all my land
Dare my longing understand;
The whole folk like a peasant bows
Lest its look should meet my brows
And be harmed by this beauty of mine.
I burn their brains as I were sign
Of God's beautiful anger sent
To master them with punishment
Of beauty that must pour distress
On hearts grown dark with ugliness.
But it is I am the punisht one.
Is there no man, is there none,
In whom my beauty will but move
The lust of a delighted love;
In whom some spirit of God so thrives
That we may wed our lonely lives.
Is there no man, is there none?"—
She said, "I will go to Solomon."

EPILOGUE

What shall we do for Love these days?
How shall we make an altar-blaze
To smite the horny eyes of men
With the renown of our Heaven,
And to the unbelievers prove
Our service to our dear god, Love?
What torches shall we lift above
The crowd that pushes through the mire,
To amaze the dark heads with strange fire?
I should think I were much to blame,
If never I held some fragrant flame
Above the noises of the world,
And openly 'mid men's hurrying stares,
Worshipt before the sacred fears
That are like flashing curtains furl'd
Across the presence of our lord Love.
Nay, would that I could fill the gaze
Of the whole earth with some great praise
Made in a marvel for men's eyes,
Some tower of glittering masonries,
Therein such a spirit flourishing
Men should see what my heart can sing:
All that Love hath done to me
Built into stone, a visible glee;
Marble carried to gleaming height
As moved aloft by inward delight;
Not as with toil of chisels hewn,
But seeming poised in a mighty tune.

For of all those who have been known
To lodge with our kind host, the sun,
I envy one for just one thing:
In Cordova of the Moors
There dwelt a passion-minded King,
Who set great bands of marble-hewers
To fashion his heart's thanksgiving
In a tall palace, shapen so
All the wondering world might know

The joy he had of his Moorish lass.
His love, that brighter and larger was
Than the starry places, into firm stone
He sent, as if the stone were glass
Fired and into beauty blown.
Solemn and invented gravely
In its bulk the fabric stood,
Even as Love, that trusteth bravely
In its own exceeding good
To be better than the waste
Of time's devices; grandly spaced,
Seriously the fabric stood.
But over it all a pleasure went
Of carven delicate ornament,
Wreathing up like ravishment,
Mentioning in sculptures twined
The blitheness Love hath in his mind;
And like delighted senses were
The windows, and the columns there
Made the following sight to ache
As the heart that did them make.
Well I can see that shining song
Flowering there, the upward throng
Of porches, pillars and windowed walls,
Spires like piercing panpipe calls,
Up to the roof's snow-cloudy flight;
All glancing in the Spanish light
White as water of arctic tides,
Save an amber dazzle on sunny sides.
You had said, the radiant sheen
Of that palace might have been
A young god's fantasy, ere he came
His serious worlds and suns to frame;
Such an immortal passion
Quiver'd among the slim hewn stone.
And in the nights it seemed a jar
Cut in the substance of a star,
Wherein a wine, that will be poured
Some time for feasting Heaven, was stored.
But within this fretted shell,
The wonder of Love made visible,

The King a private gentle mood
There placed, of pleasant quietude.
For right amidst there was a court,
Where always muskèd silences
Listened to water and to trees;
And herbage of all fragrant sort,—
Lavender, lad's love, rosemary,
Basil, tansy, centaury,—
Was the grass of that orchard, hid
Love's amazements all amid.
Jarring the air with rumor cool,
Small fountains played into a pool
With sound as soft as the barley's hiss
When its beard just sprouting is;
Whence a young stream, that trod on moss,
Prettily rimpled the court across.
And in the pool's clear idleness,
Moving like dreams through happiness,
Shoals of small bright fishes were;
In and out weed-thickets bent
Perch and carp, and sauntering went
With mounching jaws and eyes a-stare;
Or on a lotus leaf would crawl,
A brinded loach to bask and sprawl,
Tasting the warm sun ere it dipt
Into the water; but quick as fear
Back his shining brown head slipt
To crouch on the gravel of his lair,
Where the cooled sunbeams broke in wrack,
Spilt shatter'd gold about his back.
So within that green-veiled air,
Within that white-walled quiet, where
Innocent water thought aloud,—
Childish prattle that must make
The wise sunlight with laughter shake
On the leafage overbowed,—
Often the King and his love-lass
Let the delicious hours pass.
All the outer world could see
Graved and sawn amazingly

Their love's delighted riotise,
Fixt in marble for all men's eyes;
But only these twain could abide
In the cool peace that withinside
Thrilling desire and passion dwelt;
They only knew the still meaning spelt
By Love's flaming script, which is
God's word written in ecstasies.
And where is now that palace gone,
All the magical skill'd stone,
All the dreaming towers wrought
By Love as if no more than thought
The unresisting marble was?
How could such a wonder pass?
Ah, it was but built in vain
Against the stupid horns of Rome,
That pusht down into the common loam
The loveliness that shone in Spain.
But we have raised it up again!
A loftier palace, fairer far,
Is ours, and one that fears no war.
Safe in marvelous walls we are;
Wondering sense like builded fires,
High amazement of desires,
Delight and certainty of love,
Closing around, roofing above
Our unapproacht and perfect hour
Within the splendors of love's power.

WOMAN'S BEAUTY

(*From "Vashti"*)

What thing shall be held up to woman's beauty?
Where are the bounds of it? Yea, what is all
The world, but an awning scaffolded amid
The waste perilous Eternity, to lodge
This Heaven-wander'd princess, woman's beauty?
The East and West kneel down to thee, the North
And South; and all for thee their shoulders bear
The load of fourfold space. As yellow morn
Runs on the slippery waves of the spread sea,

Thy feet are on the griefs and joys of men
That shine to be thy causey. Out of tears
Indeed, and blitheness, murder and lust and love,
Whatever has been passionate in clay,
Thy flesh was tempered. Behold in thy body
The yearnings of all men measured and told,
Insatiate endless agonies of desire
Given thy flesh, the meaning of thy shape!
What beauty is there, but thou makest it?
How is earth good to look on, woods and fields,
The season's garden, and the courageous hills,
All this green raft of earth moored in the seas?
The manner of the sun to ride the air,
The stars God has imagined for the night?
What's this behind them that we cannot near,
Secret still on the point of being blabbed,
The ghost in the world that flies from being named?
Where do they get their beauty from, all these?
They do but glaze a lantern lit for man,
And woman's beauty is the flame therein.

WITCHCRAFT: NEW STYLE

The sun drew off at last his piercing fires.
Over the stale warm air, dull as a pond
And moveless in the gray quieted street,
Blue magic of a summer evening glowed.
The sky, that had been dazzling stone all day,
Hollowed in smooth hard brightness, now dissolved
To infinite soft depth, and smoldered down
Low as the roofs, dark burning blue, and soared
Clear to that winking drop of liquid silver,
The first exquisite star. Now the half-light
Tidied away the dusty litter parching
Among the cobbles, veiled in the color of distance
Shabby slates and brickwork moldering, turned
The hunchback houses into patient things
Resting; and golden windows now began.

A little brisk gray slattern of a woman,
Pattering along in her loose-heeled clogs,
Pusht the brass-barred door of a public-house;

The spring went hard against her; hand and knee
Shoved their weak best. As the door poised ajar,
Hullabaloo of talking men burst out,
A pouring babble of inflamed palaver,
And overriding it and shouted down
High words, jeering or downright, broken like
Crests that leap and stumble in rushing water.
Just as the door went wide and she stept in,
"She cannot do it!" one was bawling out:
A glaring hulk of flesh with a bull's voice.
He fingered with his neckerchief, and stretcht
His throat to ease the anger of dispute,
Then spat to put a full stop to the matter.
The little woman waited, with one hand
Propping the door, and smiled at the loud man.
They saw her then; and the sight was enough
To gag the speech of every drinker there:
The din fell down like something chopt off short.
Blank they all wheeled towards her, with their mouths
Still gaping as though full of voiceless words.
She let the door slam to; and all at ease,
Amused, her smile wrinkling about her eyes,
Went forward; they made room for her quick enough.
Her chin just topt the counter; she gave in
Her bottle to the potboy, tuckt it back,
Full of bright tawny ale, under her arm,
Rapt down the coppers on the planisht zinc,
And turned: and no word spoken all the while.
The first voice, in that silent crowd, was hers,
Her light snickering laugh, as she stood there
Pausing, scanning the sawdust at her feet.
Then she switcht round and faced the positive man
Whose strong "She cannot do it!" all still felt
Huskily shouting in their guilty ears.
"She can't, eh? She can't do it?"—Then she'd heard!
The man, inside his ruddy insolent flesh,
Had hoped she did not hear. His barrel chest
Gave a slight cringe, as though the glint of her eyes
Prickt him. But he stood up to her awkwardly bold,
One elbow on the counter, gripping his mug
Like a man holding on to a post for safety.

The Man You can't do what's not nature: nobody can
The Woman And louts like you have nature in your pocket?
The Man I don't say that—
The Woman If you kept saying naught,
No one would guess the fool you are.
Second Man Almost
My very words!
The Woman O you're the knowing man!
The spark among the cinders!
First Man You can't fetch
A free man back, unless he wants to come.
The Woman Nay, I'll be bound he doesn't want to come!
Third Man And he won't come: he told me flat he wouldn't
The Woman Are you there too?
Third Man And if he does come back
It will be devilry brought him.
The Woman I shall bring him;—
Tonight.
First Man How will he come?
The Woman Running: unless
He's broke his leg, and then he'll have to come
Crawling. But he will come.
First Man How do you know
What he may choose to do, three countries off?
The Woman He choose?
Third Man You haven't got him on a lead.
The Woman Haven't I though!
Second Man That's right: it's what I said
The Woman Aye, there are brains in your family.
First Man You have
Some sort of pull on him, to draw him home?
The Woman You may say that: I have hold of his mind.
And I can slack it off or fetch it taut,
And make him dance a score of miles away
An answer to the least twangling thrum
I play on it. He thought he lurkt at last
Safely; and all the while, what has he been?
An eel on the end of a night-line; and it's time
I hauled him in. You'll see, tonight I'll land him
Third Man Bragging's a light job.

The Woman You daren't let me take
Your eyes in mine!—Haul, did I say? no need:
I give his mind a twitch, and up he comes
Tumbling home to me. Whatever work he's at,
He drops the thing he holds like redhot iron
And runs—runs till he falls down like a beast
Pole-axt, and grunts for breath; then up and on,
No matter does he know the road or not:
The strain I put on his mind will keep him going
Right as a homing-pigeon.

First Man Devilry
I call it.

The Woman And you're welcome.

Second Man But the law
Should have a say here.

The Woman What, isn't he mine,
My own? There's naught but what I please about it.

Third Man Why did you let him go?

The Woman To fetch him back!
For I enjoy this, mind. There's many a one
Would think to see me, There goes misery!
There's a queer starveling for you!—and I do
A thing that makes me like a saint in glory,
The life of me the sound of a great tune
Your flesh could never hear: I can send power
Delighting out of me! O, the mere thought
Has made my blood go smarting in my veins,
Such a flame glowing along it!—And all the same
I'll pay him out for sidling off from me.
But I'll have supper first.

When she was gone,
Their talk could scarcely raise itself again
Above a grumble. But at last a cry
Sharp-pitcht came startling in from the street: at once
Their moody talk exploded into flare
Of swearing hubbub, like gunpowder dropt

On embers; mugs were clapt down, out they bolted
Rowdily jostling, eager for the event.
All down the street the folk thronged out of doors,
But left a narrow track clear in the middle;
And there a man came running, a tall man
Running desperately and slowly, pounding
Like a machine, so evenly, so blindly;
And regularly his trotting body wagged.
Only one foot clattered upon the stones;
The other padded in his dogged stride:
The boot was gone, the sock hung frayed in shreds
About his ankle, the foot was blood and earth;
And never a limp, not the least flinch, to tell
The wounded pulp hit stone at every step.
His clothes were tattered and his rent skin showed,
Harrowed with thorns. His face was pale as putty,
Thrown far back; clots of drooping spittle foamed
On his mustache, and his hair hung in tails,
Mired with sweat; and sightless in their sockets
His eyeballs turned up white, as dull as pebbles.
Evenly and doggedly he trotted,
And as he went he moaned. Then out of sight
Round a corner he swerved, and out of hearing.
—"The law should have a say to that, by God!"

JAMES STEPHENS

James Stephens was born in Dublin in February, 1882. His youth was difficult, his livelihood precarious. Stephens was "discovered" in an office and saved from clerical slavery by George Russell ("Æ"). Always a poet, many of Stephens's most poetic moments are in his highly colored prose. And yet, although the finest of his novels, *The Crock of Gold* (1912), contains more wild fantasy and quaint imagery than his verse, his *Insurrections* (1909) and *The Hill of Vision* (1912) reveal a rebellious spirit that is at

once hotly ironic and coolly whimsical. *Green Branches* (1916) and *Reincarnations* (1918)—the latter being free adaptations from the Gaelic—are persuasive volumes of his verse.

Collected Poems (1926) discloses two strongly differentiated personalities. There is the familiar and well-beloved Irish gamin, intimate with goats and gods, the play-boy of the roads, deferential to rabbits and lesser folk, impudent to the universe. There is, also, the less popular but more sizeable poet, the author of "The Crest Jewel," "In Waste Places," "The Main Deep" with its surging rhythm held in a few syllables, and "A Prelude and a Song" which moves with the gentle solemnity of a river. Traces of Blake are in the later Stephens; the poet, discarding his light grotesquerie, becomes the seer. A less amusing singer is the result, but a more impassioned one. In youth Stephens delighted in gay mischiefs, pranking with unnatural phenomena; in maturity he is concerned with nothing less than elemental truths.

Both personalities combine in the prose fictions for which Stephens is famous. *Deirdre* (1923) and *In the Land of Youth* (1924) continue the re-creations from the Irish folk- and fairy-tales. *Hunger* (1918), originally published under the pseudonym "James Esse," was incorporated in the somber collection of short stories *Etched in Moonlight* (1928) which, curiously enough, was poorly received in England and was an enormous success in America. An edition of his *Irish Fairy Tales* was arranged for children.

Stephens's final characteristic is his delightful blend of incongruities—he successfully mingles the bizarre, the buoyant and the profound. No more vigorous imagination has come out of Ireland since J. M. Synge.

THE SHELL

And then I pressed the shell
Close to my ear
And listened well,
And straightway like a bell
Came low and clear
The slow, sad murmur of the distant seas,
Whipped by an icy breeze
Upon a shore
Wind-swept and desolate.
It was a sunless strand that never bore
The footprint of a man,
Nor felt the weight
Since time began

Of any human quality or stir
Save what the dreary winds and waves incur.
And in the hush of waters was the sound
Of pebbles rolling round,
For ever rolling with a hollow sound.
And bubbling sea-weeds as the waters go
Swish to and fro
Their long, cold tentacles of slimy gray.
There was no day,
Nor ever came a night
Setting the stars alight
To wonder at the moon:
Was twilight only and the frightened croon,
Smitten to whimpers, of the dreary wind
And waves that journeyed blind—
And then I loosed my ear . . . O, it was sweet
To hear a cart go jolting down the street.

WHAT THOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

I saw God. Do you doubt it?
Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man. His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and
He looked upon the World and all about it:
I saw him plainer than you see me now,
You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;
His look was all dissatisfied.
His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
"That star went always wrong, and from the start
I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand—
I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth. Then I said, "Stay,
You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way;

And I will never move from where I stand."
He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
And stayed His hand.

TO THE FOUR COURTS, PLEASE

The driver rubbed at his nettly chin
With a huge, loose forefinger, crooked and black,
And his wobbly, violet lips sucked in,
And puffed out again and hung down slack:
One fang shone through his lop-sided smile,
In his little pouched eye flickered years of guile.

And the horse, poor beast, it was ribbed and forked,
And its ears hung down, and its eyes were old,
And its knees were knuckly, and as we talked
It swung the stiff neck that could scarcely hold
Its big, skinny head up—then I stepped in,
And the driver climbed to his seat with a grin.

God help the horse and the driver too,
And the people and beasts who have never a friend,
For the driver easily might have been you,
And the horse be me by a different end.
And nobody knows how their days will cease,
And the poor, when they're old, have little of peace.

LITTLE THINGS

Little things that run and quail
And die in silence and despair;

Little things that fight and fail
And fall on earth and sea and air;

All trapped and frightened little things,
The mouse, the coney, hear our prayer.

As we forgive those done to us,
The lamb, the linnet, and the hare,

Forgive us all our trespasses,
Little creatures everywhere.

THE RED-HAIRED MAN'S WIFE

I have taken that vow—
  And you were my friend
But yesterday—now
  All that's at an end,
And you are my husband, and claim me, and I must depend.

Yesterday I was free,
  Now you, as I stand,
Walk over to me
  And take hold of my hand.
You look at my lips, your eyes are too bold, your smile is too
    bland.

My old name is lost,
  My distinction of race:
Now the line has been crossed,
  Must I step to your pace?
Must I walk as you list, and obey and smile up in your face?

All the white and the red
  Of my cheeks you have won;
All the hair of my head,
  And my feet, tho' they run,
Are yours, and you own me and end me just as I begun.

Must I bow when you speak,
  Be silent and hear,
Inclining my cheek
  And incredulous ear
To your voice, and command, and behest, hold your lightest
    wish dear?

I am woman, but still
  Am alive, and can feel
Every intimate thrill
  That is woe or is weal.
I, aloof, and divided, apart, standing far, can I kneel?

If not, I shall know,
I shall surely find out,
And your world will throw
In disaster and rout;
I am woman and glory and beauty, I mystery, terror, and doubt.

I am separate still,
I am I and not you:
And my mind and my will,
As in secret they grew,
Still are secret, unreached and untouched and not subject to you.

HATE

My enemy came nigh,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,
That bitter heart and savage, said to me:
"Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem to us then a mystery
That we could hate each other."
Thus said he,
And did not turn away,
Waiting to hear what I might have to say.
But I fled quickly, fearing if I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

THE WATCHER

A rose for a young head,
A ring for a bride,
Joy for the homestead
Clean and wide—

Who's that waiting
In the rain outside?

A heart for an old friend,
A hand for the new:
Love can to earth lend
Heaven's hue—
Who's that standing
In the silver dew?

A smile for the parting,
A tear as they go,
God's sweethearting
Ends just so—
Who's that watching
Where the black winds blow?

He who is waiting
In the rain outside,
He who is standing
Where the dew drops wide,
He who is watching
In the wind must ride
(Tho' the pale hands cling)
With the rose
And the ring
And the bride,
Must ride
With the red of the rose,
And the gold of the ring,
And the lips and the hair of the bride.

RIGHTEOUS ANGER

The lanky hank of a she in the inn over there
Nearly killed me for asking the loan of a glass of beer:
May the devil grip the whey-faced slut by the hair,
And beat bad manners out of her skin for a year.

That parboiled imp, with the hardest jaw you will see
On virtue's path, and a voice that would rasp the dead,
Came roaring and raging the minute she looked at me,
And threw me out of the house on the back of my head!

If I asked her master he'd give me a cask a day;
But she with the beer at hand, not a gill would arrange!
May she marry a ghost and bear him a kitten and may
The High King of Glory permit her to get the mange.

THE MAIN-DEEP

The long rólling,
Steady-póuring,
Deep-trenchéd
Green billow:

The wide-topped,
Unbróken,
Green-glacid,
Slow-sliding.

Cold-flushing,
On—on—on—
Chill-rushing,
Hush-hushing,

Hush—hushing. . . .

ODELL

My mind is sad and weary thinking how
The griffins of the Gael went over the sea
From noble Eiré, and are fighting now
In France and Flanders and in Germany.

If they, 'mid whom I sported without dread,
Were home I would not mind what foe might do,
Or fear tax-man Odell would seize my bed
To pay the hearth-rate that is overdue.

I pray to Him who, in the haughty hour
Of Babel, threw confusion on each tongue,
That I may see our princes back in power,
And see Odell, the tax-collector, hung.

BLUE BLOOD

(After O'Bruaidar)

We thought at first, this man is a king for sure,
Or the branch of a mighty and ancient and famous lineage—
That silly, sulky, illiterate, black-avised boor
Who was hatched by foreign vulgarity under a hedge.

The good men of Clare were drinking his health in a flood,
And gazing with me in awe of the princely lad,
And asking each other from what bluest blueness of blood
His daddy was squeezed, and the pa of the da of his dad?

We waited there, gaping and wondering, anxiously,
Until he'd stop eating and let the glad tidings out,
And the slack-jawed booby proved to the hilt that he
Was lout, son of lout, by old lout, and was da to a lout!

THE CREST JEWEL

I

The leaf will wrinkle to decay
And crumble into dust away!

The rose, the lily, grow to eld,
And are, and are no more, beheld!

Nothing will stay! For, as the eye
Rests upon an object nigh,

It is not there to look upon!
It is mysteriously gone!

And, in its place, another thing
Apes its shape and fashioning!

II

All that the sun will breathe today
The moon will lip and wear away

Tonight. And all will re-begin
Tomorrow as the dawn comes in.

Is no beginning, middle-trend
Or argument to that or end.

No cause and no effect, and no
Reason why it should be so.

Or why it might be otherwise
To other minds or other eyes.

III

The soul can dream itself to be
Adrift upon an endless sea

Of day and night. The soul can seem
To be all things that it can dream!

Yet needs but look within to find
That which is steady in the wind,

That which the fire does not appal,
Which good and ill mourn not at all.

Which does not seek, or lack, or try.
And was not born, and cannot die!

IV

It has been writ in wisdom old—
This is the last word to be told:

—There is no dissolution! No
Creation! There are none in woe!

There is no teacher, teaching, taught!
Are none who long for, lack for aught!

Are none who pine for freedom! None
Are liberated under sun!

—And this is absolutely true
In Him who dreams in me and you.

IN WASTE PLACES

As a naked man I go
Through the desert, sore afraid;
Holding high my head, although
I'm as frightened as a maid.

The lion crouches there! I saw
In barren rocks his amber eye!
He parts the cactus with his paw!
He stares at me as I go by!

He would pad upon my trace
If he thought I was afraid!
If he knew my hardy face
Veils the terrors of a maid.

He rises in the night-time, and
He stretches forth! He snuffs the air!
He roars! He leaps along the sand!
He creeps! He watches everywhere!

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale
Through the darkness I can see!
He lashes fiercely with his tail!
He makes again to spring at me!

I am the lion, and his lair!
I am the fear that frightens me!
I am the desert of despair!
And the night of agony!

Night or day, whate'er befall,
I must walk that desert land,
Until I dare my fear and call
The lion out to lick my hand.

Martin (Donisthorpe) Armstrong was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1882. He was educated at Cambridge and was associate literary editor of *The Spectator* from 1922 to 1924.

Besides being a poet, Armstrong is a prose writer of delicate nuances. His first publication was a volume of verse, *Exodus and other Poems* (1912), which, like the great majority of first offerings, was wholly without distinction. Even *Thirty New Poems*, which followed six years later, in 1918, lacked any dominating quality and it was not until the publication of *The Buzzards and Other Poems* (1921) that Armstrong began to interest his readers.

Although Armstrong has not ceased writing poetry, most of his work since *The Buzzards* has been in prose. *The Puppet Show* (1922) and *The Bazaar* (1924) are collections of short tales; *The Goat and Compasses* (1925) is a novel which has a country pub as its background.

Latterly, Armstrong has busied himself with larger prose forms, *The Stepson* (1927) being a full novel. A limited edition of *The Bird Catcher and Other Poems* appeared in 1929, *The Sleeping Fury*, his best novel, appearing at the same time. *The Fiery Dive* (1930) is a collection of short stories which play variations on Armstrong's favorite theme: the conflict between love and morality.

FROST IN LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS

Lifeless, still, in the frosty air
The old stone houses round the square
Look out upon gray lawns whose grass
Is frozen to brittle blades of steel or glass;
And on black beds through whose ice-welded crust,
Hollow and hard, no gardener's spade could thrust;
And on black branches that forget to grow
And hang benumbed and hypnotized as though
The sap stood still. The very air seems dead,
All sound dried out of it. No ringing tread
Warms the numbed silence. Even the sun himself,
An orange disk in a gray frost-laden sky,
Hangs lightless like a plate upon a shelf.

This is not life. Some ghost of otherwhere
Takes shadowy substance from the frozen air
To hover briefly till the spell is broken.
A dream, a passing thought, a faint word spoken!

But suddenly from a corner of the square
A shimmering fount of sound leaps clean and rare,
A small thin frosty cheer like tinkling glass.
Is it the shouts of boys that pass
Running in file to slide on the icy curb,
Or dryads, sick for spring,
Wailing forlornly under the frozen herb?
O Light of Youth, O Flower of Life in Death!
We listen with bated breath.
So sad, so clear the delicate wistful spell!

Till frost lays hold on the sound and all is still.

THE CAGE

Man, afraid to be alive,
Shuts his soul in senses five;
From fields of Uncreated Light
Into the crystal tower of Sight;
And from the roaring Songs of Space
Into the small, flesh-carven place
Of the Ear whose cave impounds
Only small and broken sounds;
And to his narrow sense of Touch
From Strength that held the stars in clutch;
And from the warm ambrosial Spice
Of flowers and fruits of Paradise
To the frail and fitful power
Of Tongue's and Nose's sweet and sour.
And toiling for a sordid wage
There in his self-created Cage.
Ah, how safely barred is he
From menace of Eternity.

JOHN DRINKWATER

John Drinkwater was born in 1882, was educated at the Oxford High School, and was for a time in various Assurance Offices. His first book, *Poems* (1903), published at the age of 21, was followed by another collection of verse, *The Death of Leander* (1906).

Primarily a poetic dramatist, Drinkwater is best known as the

author of *Abraham Lincoln—A Play* (1919) founded on Lord Charnwood's masterly and analytical biography. He has published many volumes of poems, most of them meditative and elegiac in mood.

The best of his efforts were collected in *Poems*, 1908-14. Since this volume, Drinkwater has published seven volumes of verse beginning with *Tides* (1917) and *Seeds of Time* (1921). By 1929 he was the author of some forty volumes, including a biography, *Mr. Charles, King of England* (1926). His too prolific rhyming, compounded for the most part of colorless clichés, was assembled in *Collected Poems* (1923). *Collected Plays* appeared in 1925. Drinkwater has achieved a kind of fictionalized biography in theatrical, as distinguished from dramatic, form. His concern with the approved "great names"—Abraham Lincoln, Mary Stuart, Oliver Cromwell, Robert E. Lee, Robert Burns—leads him to inflate his plays with specious grandeur, an artificiality of posture and speech, the same quality which so often devitalizes his verse.

RECIPROCITY

I do not think that skies and meadows are
Moral, or that the fixture of a star
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees
Have wisdom in their windless silences.
Yet these are things invested in my mood
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude,
That in my troubled season I can cry
Upon the wide composure of the sky,
And envy fields, and wish that I might be
As little daunted as a star or tree.

A TOWN WINDOW

Beyond my window in the night
  Is but a drab inglorious street,
Yet there the frost and clean starlight
  As over Warwick woods are sweet.

Under the gray drift of the town
  The crocus works among the mold
As eagerly as those that crown
  The Warwick spring in flame and gold.

And when the tramway down the hill
Across the cobbles moans and rings,
There is about my window-sill
The tumult of a thousand wings.

JAMES JOYCE

James Joyce was born in Dublin, February 2, 1882. He was educated at the Jesuit school at Clongowes Wood, Belvedere College and the Royal University of Dublin. He studied medicine in Paris (where he has lived since early manhood), discontinued his medical studies in the hope of becoming a professional singer, gave up singing to become a teacher in Berlitz Schools on the Continent, and published his first book in 1907.

This first volume was a volume of verse, *Chamber Music*, written in his early twenties, but not published in America until 1918. Admirers of Joyce point to the fact that, even in his most difficult prose, he has never ceased being the poet. His work in prose has received international attention and almost universal notoriety. *Dubliners* (1914) and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) were received with respect and little disapproval. But with *Ulysses* (1922) Joyce became a storm-center. His appraisers trod no middle way: they either asserted, and loudly, that he was an unqualifiedly great genius, or insisted, even more vociferously, that he was an obscene madman, whose writings were subversive and properly banned by the censor. This is not the place to enter so controversial a problem. It may, however, be stated that there can be no question regarding the importance of *Ulysses* both as an experimental art work and as a document of the times.

Pomes Penyeach (1927) resembles Joyce's later style only in its title. It is delicate, certain, and lyrical throughout. Like the early *Chamber Music*, the verse is conventional in theme, orthodox in treatment, harmonically simple, and the very antithesis of everything for which Joyce is celebrated.

"I HEAR AN ARMY"

I hear an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging, foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armor, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the charioteers.

They cry unto the night their battle-name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long, green hair:
They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?
My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?

ALL DAY I HEAR

All day I hear the noise of waters
Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is when, going
Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the waters'
Monotone.

The gray winds, the cold winds are blowing
Where I go.
I hear the noise of many waters
Far below.
All day, all night, I hear them flowing
To and fro.

"O SWEETHEART, HEAR YOU"

O sweetheart, hear you
Your lover's tale;
A man shall have sorrow
When friends him fail.

For he shall know then
Friends be untrue
And a little ashes
Their words come to.

But one unto him
Will softly move
And softly woo him
In ways of love.

His hand is under
  Her smooth round breast;
So he who has sorrow
  Shall have rest.

SONG

O, it was out by Donnycarney,
  When the bat flew from tree to tree,
My love and I did walk together,
  And sweet were the words she said to me.

Along with us the summer wind
  Went murmuring—O, happily!—
But softer than the breath of summer
  Was the kiss she gave to me.

ON THE BEACH AT FONTANA

Wind whines and whines the shingle,
The crazy pierstakes groan;
A senile sea numbers each single
Slimesilvered stone.

From whining wind and colder
Gray sea I wrap him warm
And touch his trembling fineboned shoulder
And boyish arm.

Around us fear, descending
Darkness of fear above
And in my heart how deep unending
Ache of love!

FLOOD

Goldbrown upon the sated flood
The rockvine clusters lift and sway,
Vast wings above the lambent waters brood
Of sullen day.

A waste of waters ruthlessly
Sways and uplifts its weedy mane
Where brooding day stares down upon the sea
In dull disdain.

Uplift and sway, O golden vine,
Your clustered fruits to love's full flood,
Lambent and vast and ruthless as in thine
Incertitude!

FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG

Francis (E.) Brett Young was born in 1884, educated at the University of Birmingham, and trained as a doctor. His novels show the varying influences of Arnold Bennett and Joseph Conrad, but after *The Crescent Moon* (1918), he developed a manner of his own. *Sea Horses* (1925) and *Portrait of Claire*, the American edition of which was called *Love Is Enough* (1927) established his reputation.

Five Degrees South (1917) and *Poems* 1916-1918 (1919) contain the best of his verse, some of which appeared in the anthologies *Georgian Poetry*. His verse is lifted—or, as some have maintained, burdened—with a message, his motto being "Trust in the true and fiery spirit of man."

LOCHANILAUN

This is the image of my last content:
My soul shall be a little lonely lake,
So hidden that no shadow of man may break
The folding of its mountain battlement;
Only the beautiful and innocent
Whiteness of sea-born cloud drooping to shake
Cool rain upon the reed-beds, or the wake
Of churned cloud in a howling wind's descent.
For there shall be no terror in the night
When stars that I have loved are born in me,
And cloudy darkness I will hold most fair;
But this shall be the end of my delight:—
That you, my lovely one, may stoop and see
Your image in the mirrored beauty there.

Jack (John) Collings Squire was born April 2, 1884, at Plymouth, of Devonian ancestry. He was educated at Blundell's and Cambridge University, and became known as a remarkably adroit parodist. His *Imaginary Speeches* (1912) and *Tricks of the Trade* (1917) are amusing parodies and, what is more, excellent criticism. He first contributed to and then edited *The New Statesman*, founding *The London Mercury* (a monthly of which he is editor) in November, 1919. Under the pseudonym "Solomon Eagle" he wrote a page of literary criticism every week for six years, many of these papers being collected in his volume, *Books in General* (1919).

His original poetry is intellectual but simple, occasionally metaphysical and always interesting in its variable rhythms. A collection of his best verse up to 1919 was published under the title, *Poems: First Series*. A subsequent *Poems: Second Series* appeared in 1921.

Squire's *Collected Parodies, American Poems and Others, Essays at Large* all appeared in 1923. Since that year Squire has published little original work, busying himself almost exclusively with editing and anthologizing. *Apes and Peacocks* (1930) is his shrewd collection of the burlesques and satires of other parodists.

A HOUSE

Now very quietly, and rather mournfully,
  In clouds of hyacinth the sun retires,
And all the stubblefields that were so warm to him
  Keep but in memory their borrowed fires.

And I, the traveler, break, still unsatisfied,
  From that faint exquisite celestial strand,
And turn and see again the only dwelling-place
  In this wide wilderness of darkening land.

The house, that house, O now what change has come to it.
  Its crude red-brick façade, its roof of slate;
What imperceptible swift hand has given it
  A new, a wonderful, a queenly state?

No hand has altered it, that parallelogram,
  So inharmonious, so ill-arranged;
That hard blue roof in shape and color's what it was;
  No, it is not that any line has changed.

Only that loneliness is now accentuate
And, as the dusk unveils the heaven's deep cave,
This small world's feebleness fills me with awe again,
And all man's energies seem very brave.

And this mean edifice, which some dull architect
Built for an ignorant earth-turning hind,
Takes on the quality of that magnificent
Unshakable dauntlessness of human kind.

Darkness and stars will come, and long the night will be,
Yet imperturbable that house will rest,
Avoiding gallantly the stars' chill scrutiny,
Ignoring secrets in the midnight's breast.

Thunders may shudder it, and winds demoniac
May howl their menaces, and hail descend:
Yet it will bear with them, serenely, steadfastly,
Not even scornfully, and wait the end.

And all a universe of nameless messengers
From unknown distances may whisper fear,
And it will imitate immortal permanence,
And stare and stare ahead and scarcely hear.

It stood there yesterday; it will tomorrow, too,
When there is none to watch, no alien eyes
To watch its ugliness assume a majesty
From this great solitude of evening skies.

So lone, so very small, with worlds and worlds around,
While life remains to it prepared to outface
Whatever awful unconjectured mysteries
May hide and wait for it in time and space.

SONNET

There was an Indian, who had known no change,
Who strayed content along a sunlit beach
Gathering shells. He heard a sudden strange
Commingled noise: looked up; and gasped for speech.

For in the bay, where nothing was before,
Moved on the sea, by magic, huge canoes,
With bellying cloths on poles, and not one oar,
And fluttering colored signs and clambering crews.

And he, in fear, this naked man alone,
His fallen hands forgetting all their shells,
His lips gone pale, knelt low behind a stone,
And stared, and saw, and did not understand,
Columbus's doom-burdened caravels
Slant to the shore, and all their seamen land.

A FRESH MORNING

Now am I a tin whistle
Through which God blows,
And I wish to God I were a trumpet
—But why, God only knows.

PROLOGUE: IN DARKNESS

With my sleeping beloved huddled beside me, why do I lie awake,
Listening to the loud clock's hurry in the darkness, and feeling my heart's fierce ache
That beats one response to the brain's many questionings, and in solitude bears the weight
Of all the world's evil and misery and frustration, and the senseless pressure of fate?

Is it season of plowing and sowing, this long vigil, that so certainly it recurs?
Is this unsought return of a pain that was ended, is it here that a song first stirs?
Can it be that from this, when tonight's gone from memory, there will spring of a sudden, some time,
Like a silver lily breaking from black deadly waters, the thin-blown shape of a rhyme?

Another remarkable poet whose early death was a blow to English literature, James Elroy Flecker, was born in London, November 5, 1884. He studied at Trinity College, Oxford, specialized in Oriental languages at Cambridge, and went to Constantinople in the Consular Service in 1910.

The fact that the remainder of his life was spent in the East has a direct bearing on Flecker's work—his play *Hassan*, one of the most powerful and brilliantly colored modern dramas, being the definite reflection of his adopted Orientalism.

Possibly due to low vitality, Flecker found little to interest him but a reaction against realism in verse, a delight in verbal craftsmanship, and a passion for technical perfection—especially the deliberate technique of the French Parnassians whom he worshiped. Flecker was opposed to any art that was emotional or that "taught" anything. "The poet's business," he declared, "is not to save the soul of man, but to make it worth saving." Flecker's desire to be objective rather than passionate was scarcely consistent with his actual creation, even though he maintained that "the Parnassians raised the technique of their art to a height which enabled them to express the subtlest ideas in powerful and simple verse." Technique and manner were his abstract gods.

The advent of the war began to make Flecker's verse more personal and romantic. The tuberculosis that finally killed him at Davos Platz, Switzerland, January 3, 1915, forced him from an Olympian disinterest to a deep concern with life and death. He passionately denied that he was weary of living "as the pallid poets are," and he was attempting higher flights of song when his singing ceased altogether.

Flecker's two notable volumes are *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913) and *The Old Ships* (1915). A *Collected Poems*, with an autobiographical introduction and notes by J. C. Squire, was published in 1917 and drew fresh attention to Flecker's half-classical, half-romantic and always vivid touch.

THE OLD SHIPS

I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;

And all those ships were certainly so old—
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that same
(Fished up beyond Aeaea, patched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue—)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows?
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

STILLNESS

When the words rustle no more,
  And the last work's done,
When the bolt lies deep in the door,
  And Fire, our Sun,
Falls on the dark-laned meadows of the floor;

When from the clock's last chime to the next chime
  Silence beats his drum,
And Space with gaunt gray eyes and her brother Time
  Wheeling and whispering come,
She with the mold of form and he with the loom of rhyme:

Then twittering out in the night my thought-birds flee,
I am emptied of all my dreams:
I only hear Earth turning, only see
Ether's long bankless streams,
And only know I should drown if you
Laid not your hand on me.

THE WAR SONG OF THE SARACENS

We are they who come faster than fate: we are they who ride early or late:
We storm at your ivory gate: Pale Kings of the Sunset, beware!
Not on silk nor in samet we lie, not in curtained solemnity die
Among women who chatter and cry, and children who mumble a prayer.
But we sleep by the ropes of the camp, and we rise with a shout, and we tramp
With the sun or the moon for a lamp, and the spray of the wind in our hair.

From the lands, where the elephants are, to the forts of Merou and Balghar,
Our steel we have brought and our star to shine on the ruins of Ruhm.
We have marched from the Indus to Spain, and, by God, we will go there again;
We have stood on the shore of the plain where the Waters of Destiny boom.
A mart of destruction we made at Jalúla where men were afraid,
For death was a difficult trade, and the sword was a broker of doom;

And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured not a few of ambition,
And drave not a few to perdition with medicine bitter and strong;
And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright as a desolate pool,

And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their cavalry thundered along:
For the coward was drowned with the brave when our battle sheered up like a wave,
And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to God in our song.

TENEBRIS INTERLUCENTEM

A linnet who had lost her way
Sang on a blackened bough in Hell,
Till all the ghosts remembered well
The trees, the wind, the golden day.

At last they knew that they had died
When they heard music in that land,
And some one there stole forth a hand
To draw a brother to his side.

TO A POET A THOUSAND YEARS HENCE

I who am dead a thousand years,
  And wrote this sweet archaic song,
Send you my words for messengers
  The way I shall not pass along.

I care not if you bridge the seas,
  Or ride secure the cruel sky,
Or build consummate palaces
  Of metal or of masonry.

But have you wine and music still,
  And statues and a bright-eyed love,
And foolish thoughts of good and ill,
  And prayers to them who sit above?

How shall we conquer? Like a wind
  That falls at eve our fancies blow,
And old Maeonides the blind
  Said it three thousand years ago.

O friend unseen, unborn, unknown,
Student of our sweet English tongue,
Read out my words at night, alone:
I was a poet, I was young.

Since I can never see your face,
And never shake you by the hand,
I send my soul through time and space
To greet you. You will understand.

THE TOWN WITHOUT A MARKET

There lies afar behind a western hill
The town without a Market, white and still;
For six feet long and not a third as high
Are those small habitations. There stood I,
Waiting to hear the citizens beneath
Murmur and sigh and speak through tongueless teeth.
When all the world lay burning in the sun
I heard their voices speak to me. Said one:
"Bright lights I loved and colors, I who find
That death is darkness, and has struck me blind."
Another cried: "I used to sing and play,
But here the world is silent, day by day."
And one: "On earth I could not see or hear,
But with my fingers touched what I was near,
And knew things round and soft, and brass from gold,
And dipped my hand in water, to feel cold,
And thought the grave would cure me, and was glad
When the time came to lose what joy I had."
Soon all the voices of a hundred dead
Shouted in wrath together. Some one said,
"I care not, but the girl was sweet to kiss
At evening in the meadows." "Hard it is,"
Another cried, "to hear no hunting horn.
Ah me! the horse, the hounds, and the great gray morn
When I rode out a-hunting." And one sighed,
"I did not see my son before I died."
A boy said, "I was strong and swift to run:
Now they have tied my feet; what have I done?"

A man, "But it was good to arm and fight
And storm their cities in the dead of night."
An old man said, "I read my books all day,
But death has taken all my books away."
And one, "The popes and prophets did not well
To cheat poor dead men with false hopes of hell.
Better the whips of fire that hiss and rend
Than painless void proceeding to no end."
I smiled to hear them restless, I who sought
Peace. For I had not loved, I had not fought,
And books are vanities, and manly strength
A gathered flower. God grants us peace at length!
I heard no more, and turned to leave their town
Before the chill came, and the sun went down.
Then rose a whisper, and I seemed to know
A timorous man, buried long years ago.
"On Earth I used to shape the Thing that seems.
Master of all men, give me back my dreams.
Give me the world that never failed me then,
The hills I made and peopled with tall men,
The palace that I built and called my home,
My cities which could break the pride of Rome,
The three queens hidden in the sacred tree,
And those white cloudy folk who sang to me.
O death, why hast thou covered me so deep?
I was thy sister's child, the friend of Sleep."

Then said my heart, Death takes and cannot give.
Dark with no dream is hateful: let me live!

ANNA WICKHAM

Anna Wickham was born in Wimbledon, Surrey, in 1884. She went to Australia at six, returned when she was twenty-one, studied for Opera in Paris with De Reszke and suddenly, after a few years of marriage, became a poet. In a burst of creative energy she wrote nine hundred poems in four years.

Her first two books (*The Contemplative Quarry*, 1915, and *The Man with a Hammer*, 1916) were republished in America in one volume, *The Contemplative Quarry* (1921). This was followed by *The Little Old House* (1922). Another volume, *The Noiseless Pro-*

peller, is in preparation. The most casual reading of Anna Wickham's work reveals the strength of her candor. The poems could scarcely be put in the category of "charming" verse; they are astringent and sometimes harsh; gnarled frequently by their own violences of mood. Her lines present the picture of woman struggling between dreams and domesticity; they are acutely sensitive, restless, analytical. The very tone of her poetry reflects the disturbed music and the nervous protests of her age.

Sometimes her verse tends toward mere introverted gossip, but usually it is as just in phrase as it is fearless in thought. Much of her poetry is a poetry of the senses, and in this she seems kin to D. H. Lawrence. But where Lawrence, lost in the "mazes of the female mystery," is sexually tormented, Anna Wickham, unhampered in her sensuality, delights even in her torments. She turns upon men for maintaining a traditional attitude, not to the real women of today, but to creatures half-historical, half-illusory; she berates women for fostering this tendency, thus weakening men and enchaining themselves.

> We, vital women, are no more content
> Bound, first to passion, then to sentiment.
> Of you, the masters, slaves in our poor eyes
> Who most are moved by women's tricks and lies,
> We ask our freedom. In good sooth,
> We only ask to know and speak the truth!

Yet Mrs. Wickham does more than "only ask to know and speak the truth." Her angers and querulous revulsions cannot choke the lyric impulse. Time and again she makes songs that are sweet without being sentimental, almost perfect in their simple cadences.

But for the most part she is harassed and fluctuating, torn between being the instrument of love and love itself; making, with a wry determination, an unhappy compromise between the conflicting claims of modernity and maternity. She is rarely objective; even such dramatic projections as "Meditation at Kew" and the acrid humor of "Nervous Prostration" are too bitter to be impersonal. Out of all her poems, the plangent as well as the powerful, rises this cry which is also an apologia:

> Let it be something for my song
> If it is sometimes swift and strong.

"Self-Analysis" and "The Affinity" are this remarkable and unappreciated poet *in petto*. Divided between her desire for mastery and being mastered, for perfection and her distrust of it, she typifies the woman who has repudiated order but is frustrated in lawlessness: self-condemning, self-contradicting.

Although Mrs. Wickham has written longer poems, her terse, pungently flavored lyrics are most characteristic of her. She is a psychologist by intention, but a psychologist who has not forgotten how to sing.

CREATRIX

Let us thank Almighty God
For the woman with the rod.
Who was ever and is now
Strong, essential as the plow.
She shall goad and she shall drive,
So to keep man's soul alive.
Amoris with her scented dress
Beckons, in pretty wantonness;
But the wife drives, nor can man tell
What hands so urge, what powers compel.

SONG

I was so chill, and overworn, and sad,
To be a lady was the only joy I had.
I walked the street as silent as a mouse,
Buying fine clothes, and fittings for the house.

But since I saw my love
I wear a simple dress,
And happily I move
Forgetting weariness.

SELF-ANALYSIS

The tumult of my fretted mind
Gives me expression of a kind;
But it is faulty, harsh, not plain—
My work has the incompetence of pain.

I am consumed with a slow fire,
For righteousness is my desire;
Towards that good goal I cannot whip my will,
I am a tired horse that jibs upon a hill.

I desire Virtue, though I love her not—
I have no faith in her when she is got:
I fear that she will bind and make me slave
And send me songless to the sullen grave.

I am like a man who fears to take a wife,
And frets his soul with wantons all his life.
With rich, unholy foods I stuff my maw;
When I am sick, then I believe in law.

I fear the whiteness of straight ways—
I think there is no color in unsullied days.
My silly sins I take for my heart's ease,
And know my beauty in the end disease.

Of old there were great heroes, strong in fight,
Who, tense and sinless, kept a fire alight:
God of our hope, in their great name,
Give me the straight and ordered flame!

SEHNSUCHT[1]

Because of body's hunger are we born,
And by contriving hunger are we fed;
Because of hunger is our work well done,
As so are songs well sung, and things well said.
Desire and longing are the whips of God—
God save us all from death when we are fed.

WEAPONS

Up the crag
In the screaming wind,
Naked and bleeding
I fought blind.

Then at dawn
On the snowy height
I seized a spear
By the eastern light.

[1] *Sehnsucht:* Longing.

On I trudged
In the eye of the sun,
Past the cromlech
I found a gun.

Then I strayed
In the cities of men,
In the house of my Love
I found a pen!

THE LAST ROUND[1]

Clasp you the God within yourself
And hold it fast;
After all combats shall ye come
To this good fight at last.
God is a mighty wrestler
He battles in the night;
Not till the end shall it be known
What foe you fight.
When God in you is overthrown
He'll show a light
And claim the victor for his own
And crown the fight.

TO A CRUCIFIX

O courteous Christ—Kind guest, most gracious host,
Which of these ugly things had pained you most
That silly priests repeat your words for gain
Or in your house hang symbols of your pain?

How had you withered at the servile breath
Spent in the praises of your common death,
Scorning these claims to honor and to pride
For such a death as multitudes have died.

Not in the cross was such indignity
As these acclaiming Christian ages see,
When you who lived for cure and for relief
Are most remembered for your wounds and grief.

[1] In its similarity of theme and difference of treatment, it is interesting to compare this poem with Ezra Pound's "Ballad for Gloom."

MEDITATION AT KEW

Alas! for all the pretty women who marry dull men,
Go into the suburbs and never come out again,
Who lose their pretty faces, and dim their pretty eyes,
Because no one has skill or courage to organize.

What do these pretty women suffer when they marry?
They bear a boy who is like Uncle Harry,
A girl, who is like Aunt Eliza, and not new,
These old, dull races must breed true.

I would enclose a common in the sun,
And let the young wives out to laugh and run;
I would steal their dull clothes and go away,
And leave the pretty naked things to play.

Then I would make a contract with hard Fate
That they see all the men in the world and choose a mate,
And I would summon all the pipers in the town
That they dance with Love at a feast, and dance him down.

From the gay unions of choice
We'd have a race of splendid beauty, and of thrilling voice.
The World whips frank, gay love with rods,
But frankly, gayly shall we get the gods.

THE AFFINITY

I have to thank God I'm a woman,
For in these ordered days a woman only
Is free to be very hungry, very lonely.

It is sad for Feminism, but still clear
That man, more often than woman, is pioneer.
If I would confide a new thought,
First to a man must it be brought.

Now, for our sins, it is my bitter fate
That such a man wills soon to be my mate,
And so of friendship is quick end:
When I have gained a love I lose a friend.

It is well within the order of things
That man should listen when his mate sings;
But the true male never yet walked
Who liked to listen when his mate talked.

I would be married to a full man,
As would all women since the world began;
But from a wealth of living I have proved
I must be silent, if I would be loved.

Now of my silence I have much wealth,
I have to do my thinking all by stealth.
My thoughts may never see the day;
My mind is like a catacomb where early Christians pray.

And of my silence I have much pain,
But of these pangs I have great gain;
For I must take to drugs or drink,
Or I must write the things I think.

If my sex would let me speak,
I would be very lazy and most weak;
I should speak only, and the things I spoke
Would fill the air awhile, and clear like smoke.

The things I think now I write down,
And some day I will show them to the Town.
When I am sad I make thought clear;
I can re-read it all next year.

I have to thank God I'm a woman,
For in these ordered days a woman only
Is free to be very hungry, very lonely.

THE TIRED WOMAN

O my Lover, blind me,
Take your cords and bind me,
Then drive me through a silent land
With the compelling of your open hand!

There is too much of sound, too much for sight,
In thundrous lightnings of this night,
There is too much of freedom for my feet,
Bruised by the stones of this disordered street.

I know that there is sweetest rest for me,
In silent fields, and in captivity.
O Lover! drive me through a stilly land
With the compelling of your open hand.

DIVORCE

A voice from the dark is calling me.
In the close house I nurse a fire.
Out in the dark, cold winds rush free,
To the rock heights of my desire.
I smother in the house in the valley below,
Let me out to the night, let me go, let me go!

Spirits that ride the sweeping blast,
Frozen in rigid tenderness,
Wait! For I leave the fire at last,
My little-love's warm loneliness.
I smother in the house in the valley below,
Let me out in the night, let me go, let me go!

High on the hills are beating drums,
Clear from a line of marching men
To the rock's edge the hero comes.
He calls me, and he calls again.
On the hill there is fighting, victory, or quick death,
In the house is the fire, which I fan with sick breath.
I smother in the house in the valley below,
Let me out in the dark, let me go, let me go!

AFTER ANNUNCIATION

Rest, little Guest,
Beneath my breast.
Feed, sweet Seed,
At your need.

I took Love for my lord
And this is my reward,
My body is good earth,
That you, dear Plant, have birth.

THE CHERRY-BLOSSOM WAND

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,
And carry it in my merciless hand,
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,
With a beautiful thing that can never grow wise.

Light are the petals that fall from the bough,
And lighter the love that I offer you now;
In a spring day shall the tale be told
Of the beautiful things that will never grow old.

The blossoms shall fall in the night wind,
And I will leave you so, to be kind:
Eternal in beauty are short-lived flowers,
Eternal in beauty, these exquisite hours.

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,
And carry it in my merciless hand,
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,
With a beautiful thing that shall never grow wise.

SOUL'S LIBERTY

He who has lost soul's liberty
Concerns himself for ever with his property,
As, when the folk have lost both dance and song,
Women clean useless pots the whole day long.

Thank God for war and fire
To burn the silly objects of desire,
That from the ruin of a church thrown down
We see God clear and high above the town.

TO MEN

(*Variation on Ella Wheeler Wilcox, after a poem of the same name*)

Sirs—though we fail you—let us live;
Be just, have pity, and forgive.
Think how poor Mother Eve was brought
To being as God's afterthought.

God had a vast expanse of clay
To fashion Adam's primal day;
Yet was the craftsman's limit shown
His image could not live alone.

Yet God supports eternal life
Without the comfort of a wife;
So it was proved e'er we began
God had miscalculated man.

And of his fault, he took a part
Formed woman's brain and woman's heart
Of Imperfection—vainly planned—
To love, to serve, to understand.

How can you wonder, if we stray
Through coward night and sloven day
When power in us can but reflect
God's wifelessness and man's defect.

Had lonely God when earth was new
Some blest remembrances of two,
He had not made one half of life
A shambles and a hell-stung strife.

. . . . .

Do you remember, O my Dear,
The seventh night of our first year
The night, when my first son was given
With ecstasy to tutor Heaven—

Had God loved thus, all Hell were blind
And famine, lust and murder kind.
Come, my co-adjutor, beloved smith,
Raise thou thy hammer—break the myth.

There is no marvel of creation
Exists beyond our full relation—
Yet God shall strengthen from his sins
To breed us new and breed us twins.

Thou bungling artificer yet,
Thou shalt be artist and beget
And on the form of Chaos lie
To wash the earth and raise the sky.

Not equal I, but counterpart
And in relation is my heart
Perfect with man's—as with his mind—
Mine is all strong to lose and bind.

Come then, my husband here and rest
On my so well-remolded breast.
At morning we'll go out and see
How well God works for you and me.

THE SINGER

If I had peace to sit and sing,
Then I could make a lovely thing;
But I am stung with goads and whips,
So I build songs like iron ships.

Let it be something for my song,
If it is sometimes swift and strong.

ENVOI

God, thou great symmetry,
Who put a biting lust in me
From whence my sorrows spring,
For all the frittered days
That I have spent in shapeless ways,
Give me one perfect thing.

D(avid) H(erbert) Lawrence was born September 17, 1885, in the colliery town of Eastwood, a drab hamlet on the border between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The son of workers, his novels continually reflect the rural and industrial backgrounds of his boyhood. Lawrence obtained a scholarship at the Nottingham High School and at sixteen became a pupil-teacher. After a short appointment in a London school, he abandoned teaching for literature.

Even in his mid-twenties—in *The White Peacock* (1909), *Love Poems and Others* (1913) and first of all, in *Sons and Lovers* (1913)—Lawrence pronounced the strain with which he was to be so closely identified. The two volumes of *Collected Poems* (1929) are autobiographically candid, completely characterizing. No one in his generation has pursued the cry of sex so passionately, so painfully as D. H. Lawrence; and no one has been more confused by it. A magnificently equipped craftsman, a writer *pur sang*, his gamut has never extended. His novels, with two unimportant exceptions and, more explicitly, his poems are concerned with little else than the dark fire, the broken body, the struggle, death and resurrection of crucified flesh, the recurring cycle of fulfillment and frustration. This is Lawrence's theme, a theme which he varies with great skill, but one which he can neither leave nor fully control. It is not merely his passion, it is his obsession.

This is as far as Lawrence goes. And he can go no farther except in that limbo where sex and love are desperately confused. He cannot separate his spirit from his loins; he is, at the same time, mentally detached and emotionally victimized. His agony grows sharper, his solution vaguer. This, it seems, is the core of Lawrence's *malaise*. There is something about his excitation which is uncomfortably flagellant; his sudden heats and swift revulsions are too neurotic to evoke more than pity; hysteria, in many of the poems, is subdued but not silenced.

But there is something here beyond the sex-fearful, sex-fascinated being; something beyond the self-worshiping, self-deluded artist, and that is Lawrence's intensity. Whatever its faults, the pitch and register of his work is poetry. Impotence itself has power in his propulsive verse. A poet of sensibilities which are refined to the point of being always a little wounded, a recorder of kaleidoscopic images and sensory nuances, Lawrence at forty-four had made a permanent if painful contribution to literature. There are passages in his novels—especially in *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1921)—that have the accent and the sweep of poetry; there are poems that fasten on the mind and will not be

shaken off. It is rather a curious commentary that his objective or "fictional" poems are among his best. Nothing that he has written none of his verse is more surely projected than the dramatic lyrics in dialect: "A Youth Mowing," "Violets," "Whether or Not," that remarkable sequence which a ruder Browning might have fathered.

Lawrence is more the enmeshed self, less the detached poet in "A Young Wife," "Love on the Farm," "The Wedding Morn," and the irritated fragments in *Pansies* (1929). Here speaks "the hot blood's blindfold art," chaotically, characteristically, but always eloquently.

After a struggle of many years, Lawrence succumbed to tuberculosis. His wish that he be taken to Arizona, either to die or to recuperate, could not be granted and he died March 2, 1930, at Nice, France. Immediately thereafter reappraisals set in: Lawrence was subjected to new examinations as poet, prophet, pamphleteer and, chiefly, as disturber of the cultural peace. Few writers had roused more violent and controversial issues; four of his books had been suppressed, a show of his paintings (an art to which Lawrence turned in his forties) was raided. Though unusually fecund, opposition kindled a bitter flame in him and his creative passion turned to propaganda. *The Psychology of the Unconscious* is a fantastic variation on Jung; *Studies in American Literature* is a poorly proportioned but provocative plea for the recognition of a native spirit; *Pornography and Obscenity* (1929) is a tract, an argument for the appreciation of the realities as against the hypocrisies of sexual morality.

But his polemical writing is, after all, the least of his work. In the best of his novels and poems he achieved a style that was dynamic, inflamed, savagely honest. A conscientious barbarian, he was, as Stuart Sherman wrote, "a revolutionist in favor of an individualistic, aristocratic barbarianism." He seldom wrote badly. True, his preoccupation was sex (he was described as "the novelist of the over- and the under-sexed"); he dealt almost entirely with the intensification or the perversion of the sexual instinct. But his deeper obsession, the "inner theme," was the possession and maintenance of masculine power. One homily was apparent in all his works: The world has gone stale, feebly promiscuous, prettily fetid. Small spurts of lust instead of a long passion; talk instead of acts. The world has ceased to be masculine. Its discontent, like its nervous art, its soft-rotten culture, its middle-class *malaise*, is all the outcome of womanishness. Women, pretending to need us, have used us up; women have destroyed us with merciless softness. All we cherish has become effeminized, vitiated with the white poison of their approval and the black venom of their jealousy. Suffering from a "mind-perverted, will-perverted, ego-

perverted love," the world will be happy only when man—over-civilized man—regains the free power which is the well-spring of emotional virility.

The defect in thinking is obvious. It is not "maleness" which troubles the artist but his consciousness of it. It is this lack of peace which Lawrence instinctively resented and which kept him enslaved to his narrow freedom. Coming up from that lower English world "where the good form and restraint of the public school tradition was a gag to be spat out once the speaker gained the strength of self-confidence," Lawrence, rising by self-improvement, could never resist improving others. In this he was, beneath his libertarian manner, the Puritan. "He came up," said Henry S. Canby, "when the bourgeois Victorian morality was losing its vigor, and he preached his new gospel of virility just as the Methodists preached revivalism to the Anglicans." His methods were extravagant, often exacerbated, but they were vitally his own. He had, above all, the faculty of making the reader revalue his own standards. Whatever status as an artist the future may assign him, there can be no question that he was a force.

SUSPENSE

The wind comes from the north
Blowing little flocks of birds
Like spray across the town,
And a train roaring forth
Rushes stampeding down
South, with flying curds
Of steam, from the darkening north.

Whither I turn and set
Like a needle steadfastly,
Waiting ever to get
The news that she is free;
But ever fixed, as yet,
To the lode of her agony.

A YOUTH MOWING

There are four men mowing down by the Isar;
I can hear the swish of the scythe-strokes, four
Sharp breaths taken; yea, and I
Am sorry for what's in store.

The first man out of the four that's mowing
Is mine, I claim him once and for all;
Though it's sorry I am, on his young feet, knowing
None of the trouble he's led to stall.

As he sees me bringing the dinner, he lifts
His head as proud as a deer that looks
Shoulder-deep out of the corn; and wipes
His scythe-blade bright, unhooks

The scythe-stone and over the stubble to me.
Lad, thou hast gotten a child in me,
Laddie, a man thou'lt ha'e to be,
Yea, though I'm sorry for thee.

A YOUNG WIFE

The pain of loving you
Is almost more than I can bear.

I walk in fear of you
The darkness starts up where
You stand, and the night comes through
Your eyes when you look at me.

Ah, never before did I see
The shadows that live in the sun!

Now every tall glad tree
Turns round its back to the sun
And looks down on the ground, to see
The shadow it used to shun.

At the foot of each glowing thing
A night lies looking up.

Oh, and I want to sing
And dance, but I can't lift up
My eyes from the shadows: dark
They lie spilt round the cup.

What is it?—Hark
The faint fine seethe in the air!

Like the seething sound in a shell!
It is death still seething where
The wild-flower shakes its bell
And the skylark twinkles blue—

The pain of loving you
Is almost more than I can bear.

CHERRY ROBBERS

Under the long dark boughs, like jewels red
In the hair of an Eastern girl
Hang strings of crimson cherries, as if had bled
Blood-drops beneath each curl.

Under the glistening cherries, with folded wings
Three dead birds lie:
Pale-breasted throstles and a blackbird, robberlings
Stained with red dye.

Against the haystack a girl stands laughing at me,
Cherries hung round her ears.
Offers me her scarlet fruit: I will see
If she has any tears.

A WINTER'S TALE

Yesterday the fields were only gray with scattered snow,
And now the longest grass-leaves hardly emerge;
Yet her deep footsteps mark the snow, and go
On towards the pines at the hill's white verge.

I cannot see her, since the mist's pale scarf
Obscures the dark wood and the dull orange sky;
But she's waiting, I know, impatient and cold, half
Sobs struggling in to her frosty sigh.

Why does she come so promptly, when she must know
She's only the nearer to the inevitable farewell?
The hill is steep, on the snow my steps are slow—
Why does she come, when she knows what I have to tell

LOVE ON THE FARM

What large, dark hands are those at the window
Grasping in the golden light
Which weaves its way through the evening wind
  At my heart's delight?

Ah, only the leaves! But in the west
I see a redness suddenly come
Into the evening's anxious breast—
  'Tis the wound of love goes home!

The woodbine creeps abroad
Calling low to her lover:
  The sun-lit flirt who all the day
  Has poised above her lips in play
  And stolen kisses, shallow and gay
  Of pollen, now has gone away—
    She woos the moth with her sweet, low word;
And when above her his moth-wings hover
Then her bright breast she will uncover
And yield her honey-drop to her lover.

Into the yellow, evening glow
Saunters a man from the farm below;
Leans, and looks in at the low-built shed
Where the swallow has hung her marriage bed.
  The bird lies warm against the wall.
  She glances quick her startled eyes
  Towards him, then she turns away
  Her small head, making warm display
  Of red upon the throat. Her terrors sway
  Her out of the nest's warm, busy ball,
  Whose plaintive cry is heard as she flies
  In one blue stoop from out the sties
  Into the twilight's empty hall.

Oh, water-hen, beside the rushes,
Hide your quaintly scarlet blushes,
Still your quick tail, lie still as dead,
Till the distance folds over his ominous tread!

The rabbit presses back her ears,
Turns back her liquid, anguished eyes
And crouches low; then with wild spring
Spurts from the terror of his oncoming;
To be choked back, the wire ring
Her frantic effort throttling:
  Piteous brown ball of quivering fears!
Ah, soon in his large, hard hands she dies,
And swings all loose from the swing of his walk!
Yet calm and kindly are his eyes
And ready to open in brown surprise
Should I not answer to his talk
Or should he my tears surmise.

I hear his hand on the latch, and rise from my chair
Watching the door open; he flashes bare
His strong teeth in a smile, and flashes his eyes
In a smile like triumph upon me; then careless-wise
He flings the rabbit soft on the table board
And comes toward me: he! the uplifted sword
Of his hand against my bosom! and oh, the broad
Blade of his glance that asks me to applaud
His coming! With his hand he turns my face to him
And caresses me with his fingers that still smell grim
Of rabbit's fur! God, I am caught in a snare!
I know not what fine wire is round my throat;
I only know I let him finger there
My pulse of life, and let him nose like a stoat
Who sniffs with joy before he drinks the blood.

And down his mouth comes to my mouth! and down
His bright dark eyes come over me, like a hood
Upon my mind! his lips meet mine, and a flood
Of sweet fire sweeps across me, so I drown
Against him, die, and find death good.

PIANO

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tinglin
strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles a
she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cozy parlor, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamor
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child fo
the past.

GREEN

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

A WHITE BLOSSOM

A tiny moon as small and white as a single jasmine flower
Leans all alone above my window, on night's wintry bower,
Liquid as lime-tree blossom, soft as brilliant water or rain
She shines, the first white love of my youth, passionless and i
vain.

WEDDING MORN

The morning breaks like a pomegranate
In a shining crack of red;
Ah, when tomorrow the dawn comes late
Whitening across the bed

It will find me at the marriage gate
And waiting while light is shed
On him who is sleeping satiate
With a sunk, unconscious head.

And when the dawn comes creeping in,
Cautiously I shall raise
Myself to watch the daylight win
On my first day of days,
As it shows him sleeping a sleep he got
With me, as under my gaze
He grows distinct, and I see his hot
Face freed of the wavering blaze.

Then I shall know which image of God
My man is made toward;
And I shall see my sleeping rod
Or my life's reward;
And I shall count the stamp and worth
Of the man I've accepted as mine,
Shall see an image of heaven or of earth
On his minted metal shine.

Oh, and I long to see him sleep
In my power utterly;
So I shall know what I have to keep. . . .
I long to see
My love, that spinning coin, laid still
And plain at the side of me
For me to reckon—for surely he will
Be wealth of life to me.

And then he will be mine, he will lie
Revealed to me;
Patent and open beneath my eye
He will sleep of me;
He will lie negligent, resign
His truth to me, and I
Shall watch the dawn light up for me
This fate of mine.

And as I watch the wan light shine
On his sleep that is filled of me,
On his brow where the curved wisps clot and twine
Carelessly,
On his lips where the light breaths come and go
Unconsciously,
On his limbs in sleep at last laid low
Helplessly,
I shall weep, oh, I shall weep, I know
For joy or for misery.

WHETHER OR NOT

I

Dunna thee tell me it's his'n, mother,
Dunna thee, dunna thee!
—Oh, aye, he'll come an' tell thee his-sèn,[1]
Wench, wunna he?

Tha doesna mean ter say ter me, mother,
He's gone wi' that—
—My gel, owt'll do for a man i' th' dark;
Tha's got it flat!

But 'er's old, mother, 'er's twenty year
Older nor him—
—Aye, an' yaller as a crowflower; an' yet i' th' dark
Er'd do for Tim.

Tha niver believes it, does ter, mother?
It's somebody's lies.
—Ax 'im thy-sèn, wench; a widder's lodger!
It's no surprise.

II

A widow o' forty-five
Wi' a bitter, dirty skin,
To ha' 'ticed a lad o' twenty-five,
An' 'im to 'ave been took in!

[1] His-sèn = himself.

A widow o' forty-five
As 'as sludged like a horse all 'er life
Till 'er's tough as whit-leather, to slive[1]
Atween a lad an' 'is wife!

A widow o' forty-five!
A glum old otchel, wi' long
Witch teeth, an' 'er hawk-eyes, as I've
Mistrusted all along!

An' me as 'as kept my-sèn
Shut like a daisy bud,
Clean an' new an' nice, so's when
He wed he'd ha'e summat good!

An' 'im as nice an' fresh
As any man i' th' force,
To ha' gone an' given his clean young flesh
To a woman that coarse!

III

You're stout to brave this snow, Miss Stainwright,
  Are you makin' Brinsley way?
—I'm off up th' line to Underwood
  Wi' a dress as is wanted today.

Oh, are you goin' to Underwood?
  'Appen then you've 'eered!
—What's that as 'appen I've 'eered on, Missis?
  Speak up, you nedn't be feared.

Why, your young man an' Widow Naylor,
  'Er as 'e lodges wi'!
They say he's got 'er wi' childt; but there—
  It's nothing to do wi' me!

Though if it's true, they'll turn 'im out
  O' th' p'lice force, without fail;
An' if it's *not* true, you may back your life
  They'll listen to *her* tale.

[1] To slive = to slip, to interfere.

—Well, I'm believin' no tale, Missis,
I'm seein' for my-sèn.
An' when I know for sure, Missis,
I'll talk *then.*

IV

Nay, robin red-breast, tha needna
Sit noddin' thy head at me!
My breast's as red as thine, I reckon,
Flayed red, if tha could but see.

Nay, yo' blessed pee-whips,
Yo' needna scraight [1] at me!
I'm scraightin' my-sèn but arena goin'
Ter let iv'rybody see.

Tha *art* smock-raveled, bunny,
Larropin' neck and crop
I' th' snow! but I's warrant thee
I'm further ower th' top.

V

Now sithee theer at th' reelroad crossin'
Warmin' 'is-sèn at the stool o' fire
Under the tank as fills th' ingines,
If there isn't my dearly-beloved liar!

My constable, wi' 'is buttoned breast
As stout as the truth, my Sirs! an' 'is face
As bold as a robin! It's much he cares
For this nice old shame an' disgrace.

Oh, but 'e drops 'is flag when 'e sees me!
Yi, an' 'is face goes white! Oh, yes,
Tha can stare at me wi' thy fierce blue eyes;
Tha won't stare me out, I guess.

[1] Scraight = cry.

VI

Whativer brings thee out so far
In a' this depth o' snow?
—I'm takin' 'ome a weddin'-dress,
If yer mun know.

Why, is there a weddin' at Underwood
As tha ne'd trudge up 'ere?
—It's Widder Naylor's weddin'-dress,
'Er'll be wantin' it, I 'ear.

'Er doesna want no weddin'-dress—
—Why—? but what dost mean?
—Doesn't ter know what I mean, Timmy?
Yi, tha must ha' bin 'ard ter wean!

Tha'rt a good-un at suckin'-in yet, Timmy!
But tell me, isn't it true
As 'er'll be wantin' my weddin'-dress
In a wik or two?

—Tha's no 'casions ter ha'e me on,
Lizzie; what's done is done.
—*Done*, I should think so! An' might I ask
When tha begun?

It's thee as 'as done it, as much as me,
So there, an' I tell thee flat.
—Me gotten a childt ter thy landlady?
—Tha's gotten thy answer pat.

As tha allus 'ast; but let me tell thee
Hasna ter sent me whoam, when I
Was a'most burstin' mad o' my-sèn,
An' walkin' in agony?

After I'd kissed thee at night, Lizzie,
An' tha's laid against me, an' melted
Into me, melted right into me, Lizzie,
Till I was verily swelted.

An' if my landlady seed me like it,
An' if 'er clawkin' eyes
Went through me as the light went out,
Is it any cause for surprise?

—No cause for surprise at all, my lad;
After kissin' an' cuddlin' wi' me, tha could
Turn thy mouth on a woman like that!
I hope it did thee good.

—Aye, it did; but afterwards
I could ha' killed 'er.
—Afterwards! how many times afterwards
Could ter ha' killed 'er?

Say no more, Liz, dunna thee;
'Er's as good as thee.
—Then I'll say good-by to thee, Timothy;
Take 'er i'stead o' me.

I'll ta'e thy word good-by, Liz,
Though I shonna marry 'er.
Nor 'er nor nub'dy.—It is
Very brave of you, Sir!

—T' childt maun ta'e its luck, it mun,
An' 'er maun ta'e *'er* luck.
F'r I tell yer I h'arena marryin' none
On yer; yo'n got what yer took!

—That's spoken like a man, Timmy,
That's spoken like a man!
" 'E up an' fired 'is pistol,
An' then away 'e ran!"

—I damn well shanna marry 'er,
Nor yo', so chew it no more!
I'll chuck the flamin' lot o' you—
—Yer nedn't 'ave swore!

VII

There's 'is collar round th' candlestick,
An' there's the dark-blue tie I bought 'im!
An' these is the woman's kids 'es's so fond on,
An' 'ere comes the cat as caught 'im!

I dunno wheer 'is eyes was—a gret
Round-shouldered hag! My Sirs, to think
Of 'im stoopin' to 'er! You'd wonder 'e could
Throw 'imself down *that* sink!

I expect yer know who I am, Mrs. Naylor?
  Who y'are? yis, you're Lizzie Stainwright.
An' 'appen you'd guess then what I've come for?
  —'Appen I mightn't, 'appen I might.

Yer knowed as I was courtin' Tim Merfin?
  —Yis, I knowed 'e wor courtin' thee.
An' yet yer've bin carryin' on wi' 'im!
  —Aye, an' 'im wi' me.

Well, now yer've got ter pay for it.
  —If I han, what's that ter thee?
'E isn't goin' ter marry yer.
  —Tha wants 'im thy-sèn, I see.

It 'asn't nothin' to do with me.
  —Then what art colleyfoglin' for?
I'm not 'avin' your orts an' slarts.
  —Which on us said you wor?

But I want you to know 'e's not *marryin'* you.
  —Tha wants 'im thy-sèn too bad.
Though I'll see as 'e pays you, an' does what's right
  —Tha'rt for doin' a lot wi' t' lad!

VIII

Ta'e off thy duty stripes, Tim,
  An' come in 'ere wi' me;
Ta'e off thy p'liceman's helmet
  An' look at me.

I wish tha hadna done it, Tim,
I do, an' that I do!
For whenever I look thee i' th' face, I's'll see
Her face too.

I wish I could wesh 'er off'n thee;
'Appen I can, if I try.
But tha'll ha'e ter promise ter be true ter me
Till I die. . . .

IX

Twenty pounds o' thy own tha hast, an' fifty pound ha'e I;
Thine shall go ter pay the woman, an' wi' my bit we'll buy
All as we s'll want for furniture when tha leaves this place;
An' we'll be married at th' registrar—now lift thy face.

Lift thy face an' look at me, man! canna ter look at me?
Sorry I am for this business, an' sorry if ever I've driven the
To do such a thing; though it's a poor tale, it is, that I'
bound to say,
Afore I can ta'e thee I've got a widder o' forty-five ter pay!

Dunna thee think but what I've loved thee; I've loved thee to
well.
An' 'deed an' I wish as this tale o' thine wor niver my tale t
tell!
Deed an' I wish I c'd 'a' stood at th' altar wi' thee an' bi
proud o' thee!
That I could 'a' bin first woman ter thee, as thar'rt first ma
ter me!

But we maun ma'e the best on't. So now rouse up an' loo
at me.
Look up an' say tha'rt sorry tha did it; say tha'rt sorry for m
They'll turn thee out o' th' force, I doubt me; if they do, w
can see
If my father can get thee a job on t'bank. Say tha'rt sorr
Timmy!

X

Aye, I'm sorry, I'm sorry,
  But what o' that!
Aye, I'm sorry! Tha needna worry
  Nor fret thy fat.

I'm sorry for thee, I'm sorry f'r 'er,
  I'm sorry f'r us a'.
But what then? Tha wants me, does ter
  After a'?

Ah'n put my-sèn i' th' wrong, Liz,
  An' 'er as well.
An' tha'rt that right, tha knows; 'tis
  Other folks in hell.

Tha *art* so sure tha'rt right, Liz!
  That damned sure!
But 'ark thee 'ere, that widder woman
  's less graspin', if 'er's poor.

What 'er gen, 'er gen me
  Beout a thought.
'Er gen me summat; I shanna
  Say it wor nought.

I'm sorry for th' trouble, aye
  As comes on us a'.
But sorry for what I had? why
  I'm not, that's a'.

As for marryin', I shanna marry
  Neither on yer.
Ah've 'ad a' as I can carry
  From you an' from 'er.

So I's'll go an' leave yer,
  Both on yer,
I don't like yer, Liz, I want ter
  Get away from yer.

An' I don't really like 'er neither,
Even though I've 'ad
More from 'er than from you; but either
Of yer's too much for this lad.

Let me go! what's good o' talkin'?
Let's a' ha' done.
Talk about love o' women!
Ter me it's no fun.

I'll say good-by, Liz, to yer,
Yer too much i' th' right for me.
An' wi' 'er somehow it isn't right.
So good-by, an' let's let be!

AWARE

Slowly the moon is rising out of the ruddy haze,
Divesting herself of her golden shift, and so
Emerging white and exquisite; and I in amaze
See in the sky before me, a woman I did not know
I loved, but there she goes, and her beauty hurts my heart;
I follow her down the night, begging her not to depart.

F. S. FLINT

F(rancis) S(tewart) Flint was born in 1885 and, besides being a poet, is known as a skillful translator from the French and a valuable secretary in the Ministry of Labor. He was one of the first to form the Imagist group and his "History of Imagism," in *The Egoist* (May, 1915) shows that the movement had a much earlier origin than is commonly supposed. His youth was spent in a struggle to maintain existence. As he wrote in the Introduction to *Otherworld*, "I am not a scholar in any sense; the chance of life has made me a wage-earner since I could read and write almost—so that when I invented the term 'unrhymed cadence' I was not aware that I was in the oldest of traditions, that Chaucer had spoken of it in his *House of Fame* or that Cynewulf had sung:

> Many varied voices voice I through my mouth.
> Cunning are the notes I sing, and incessantly I change them.
> Clear I cry and loud with the chant within my head;
> Holding to my tones, hiding not their sweetness,
> . . . when I burst forth with a cadenced song."

Flint himself was one of the most accomplished of the Imagist poets. His first volume, *In the Net of the Stars* (1909) anticipates the later experiments although most of it is formal in structure and is like its title, influenced by Yeats. Ford Madox Ford (at that time Ford Madox Hueffer) was quick to appreciate Flint's gift and printed his work in *The English Review*. *Cadences* appeared in 1915, *Otherworld* in 1920, the latter volume beginning with this statement: "There is only one art of writing and that is the art of poetry; and wherever you feel the warmth of human experience and imagination in any writing, there is poetry—whether it is in the form we call prose, or in rhyme and meter, or in the unrhymed cadence in which the greater part of this book is written."

Apart from his form, which is usually successful in registering racial memories, Flint's philosophy is apparent beneath a not so obvious music.

It is regrettable that Flint has not pursued poetry, having discontinued it with *Otherworld*. Since 1920 he has busied himself with translating the works of modern French poets and essayists, especially Verhaeren and Jean de Bosschere.

LONDON

London, my beautiful,
it is not the sunset
nor the pale green sky
shimmering through the curtain
of the silver birch,
nor the quietness;
it is not the hopping
of birds
upon the lawn,
nor the darkness
stealing over all things
that moves me.

But as the moon creeps slowly
over the tree-tops
among the stars,
I think of her
and the glow her passing
sheds on men.

London, my beautiful,
I will climb
into the branches
to the moonlit tree-tops,
that my blood may be cooled
by the wind.

PLANE-TREE

O tardy plane-tree
Was not the winter long enough?
The April sun
Has sprayed with green
The gray house behind the boughs
And burst the first lit
Golden lamps of the chestnut:
Its leaves fall limply
Away from the brown flower-buds;
He has dressed in pink
The black and naked almond-tree,
Bestrewn the pavement with red-tipped catkins,
And sent the sparrows to find
His pouting buds on every twig,
Excepting yours, O motley plane-tree,
Whom the motor-cars,
In scorn of your laziness,
Spurn with their dust.

SADNESS

Spirit in me,
why are you so sad?
Is it that men are still but men
and know no other way?

Over the hills
go and find the golden-garlanded trees. . . .
Autumn has come. . . .
In the soft sadness of her mists,
you may discover

a memory of the joys
of summer past,
and there forget
what men are,
and think
what men may be.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS

O golden-red and tall chrysanthemums,
you are the graceful soul of the china vase
wherein you stand
amid your leaves.

O quiet room,
you are the symbol of my patient heart.

O flowers of flame, O tall chrysanthemums,
my love who comes
will wave wide ripples of disquiet there,
and a great tide of the eternal sea
will rise at her approach,
and surge to song.

O quiet room, O flame chrysanthemums,
images of my heart and its proud love,
you have no presage of the power that comes
to fill with anguish the essential calm.

O calm wrought face, O sphinx behind the door,
her hand is on the latch.

BEGGAR

In the gutter
piping his sadness
an old man stands,
bent and shriveled,
beard draggled,
eyes dead.

Huddled and mean,
shivering in threadbare clothes—
winds beat him,
hunger bites him,
forlorn, a whistle in his hands,
piping.

Hark! the strange quality
of his sorrowful music,
wind from an empty belly
wrought magically
into the wind,—

pattern of silver on bronze.

THOMAS BURKE

Thomas Burke was born in London where, after a difficult childhood, he was self-educated. His early experiences are thinly disguised in *The Wind and the Rain.*

Burke is chiefly known as a writer of prose; his graphic *Limehouse Nights* being the most popular of his short stories, almost starting a fashion in slum-Chinese dock-side cinemas. *The Song Book of Quong Lee* is equally successful.

Burke's more sensitive side is displayed in the privately printed *Verses* and the autobiographical *The Wind and the Rain.*

PADDINGTON

Deep in a dusk of lilac the station lies,
  Vasty and echo-haunted and fiercely made;
Speared all about with suns where the arches rise,
  Leaping on lusty limbs over pools of shade.
Oh, lovely are her lean lines and lovely her poise,
Empanoplying the long, dim frenzy of noise.

But her most beauty she holds until the night,
  Even as love, until the brute day is ended,
When all her thousand eyes in a tempest of light
  Shatter cathedral gloom, and show her splendid.
Splendid we know her, and ever splendid she stands;
Clean from the splendid sweat of human hands.

Gerald Gould was born in 1885 at Scarborough, was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and was Fellow of Merton College from 1906 to 1916. Journalist as well as author, he was associate editor of *The Daily Herald* from 1919 to 1921 and literary editor of *The Saturday Review* from 1922 to 1926.

Gould began as a poet and, although he is the author of half a dozen essays and sketches, remains a poet. Of his eight books of verse, the most interesting are *The Happy Tree* (1919), *The Journey* (1920) and *Beauty, the Pilgrim* (1927). Extremely versatile, his smoothly running lines rarely descend to mere facility; a dignity of spirit underlies even the least pretentious of Gould's lyrics.

A comprehensive *Collected Poems* was published simultaneously in America and England in 1929.

SONG

She whom I love will sit apart,
And they whom love makes wise
May know the beauty in her heart
By the beauty in her eyes.

Thoughts that in quietness confute
The noisy world are hers,
Like music in a listening lute
Whose strings no finger stirs.

And in her eyes the shadows move,
Not glad nor sad, but strange
With those unchanging dreams that prove
The littleness of change.

MORTALITY

In the green quiet wood, where I was used,
In summer, to a welcome calm and dark,
I found the threat of murder introduced
By scars of white paint on the wrinkled bark.

How few old friends were to be spared! And now
I see my friends with new eyes here in town
—Men as trees walking, and on every brow
A pallid scar, and all to be cut down.

TWILIGHT

The fields grow dim; the somber mills
Stand crucified against the skies;
Blue in the distance rise
The ancient hills.

The stars come softly, and the least
Last wind is dead as dead desires;
A swarm of silver spires
Fades in the East.

The heavy thoughts that dwelt with me
Slip from me soundless, as the dead
Sink to their quiet bed
Far out at sea.

The stars are empty of concern,
The earth is empty of unrest;
Almost the burning West
Has ceased to burn.

Gray rivers and gray roads, and dells
Having the darkness at their heart;
From valleys, far apart,
The noise of bells.

THE HAPPY TREE

There was a bright and happy tree;
  The wind with music laced its boughs;
Thither across the houseless sea
  Came singing birds to house.

Men grudged the tree its happy eves,
  Its happy dawns of eager sound;
So that all crown and tower of leaves
  They leveled with the ground.

They made an upright of the stem,
  A cross-piece of a bough they made:
No shadow of their deed on them
  The fallen branches laid.

But blithely, since the year was young,
When they a fitting hill did find,
There on the happy tree they hung
The Saviour of mankind.

HUMBERT WOLFE

Humbert Wolfe was born at Milan in Italy, January 5, 1885. As he himself declared, he "lost no time in crossing to Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which town he reached during the same year and remained there till he left it for Oxford some 18 years later. Wrote sporadic and increasingly unsatisfactory verse from the age of 16 till his appointment to the British Civil Service in 1909. This appointment naturally induced in him a more restrained outlook upon life and, beyond a few casual poems and a rejected novel, he had no literary output or recognition till after the War in 1919. In that year, he published *London Sonnets,* followed in the next year by *Shylock Reasons with Mr. Chesterton.* In 1923, he published *Circular Saws,* a collection of ambiguous aphorisms, and, in 1924, *Kensington Gardens,* a collection of short poems dealing with that delectable locality. It is to be anticipated (and feared) that his output will tend rapidly to increase."

This was in 1924. Between that year and 1930 Wolfe published some eleven volumes all, with one exception, in verse. The outstanding quality is neither the dexterous satire which Wolfe uses so incisively nor the grace and charm of which he is somewhat too fond, but a confusion of the two. The surface characteristics are modern, but modern only in certain tricks of typography and employment of "slant" or "suspended" rhymes. There is, above all, a quaintly individualized fancy that delights to improvise on major themes which somehow slide into minor cadences. It is this contradiction which marks even the most definite of his volumes, an indetermination from which Wolfe seems unable to escape. It is as if the pale musicianer of whom he speaks had composed a robust theme—and arranged it as a duet for dulcimer and *viola d'amore.*

Thus the poet cannot make up his mind whether to thrust sentimentally or sigh sardonically; whether to be a mimic Heine or a tragic Pierrot; whether to be the last of an old tradition of lyricists or the first of a new generation of ironists. As a result, he is all of these in quick succession, often, indeed, at the same time. *Humoresque* (1926), the least remarkable poetically, is the most rewarding as a study of this paradoxical ambidexterity. *The Unknown Goddess* (1925) wavers between earnestness and artificiality; "Iliad," as memorable a set of stanzas about poetry ever writ-

ten, is followed by half a dozen fragilities composed of whipped cream and a spun-sugar *Weltschmerz*. In *News of the Devil* (1926) the barb of satire speeds with a savage purpose. *Cursory Rhymes* (1927), on the other hand, is a collection of verses to and for children in which the author begins by being unsure of his audience and ends by being unsure of himself; the note of naïveté seems forced, the archness calculated, the humor tricky and bookish. *This Blind Rose* (1929) again contains Wolfe's not quite detached irony, his bitter-sweet overtones, the faint artificiality of language which keeps it from being either rhetorical or realistic.

Wolfe's two best volumes up to 1930 are the early *Kensington Gardens* (1924) and the larger *Requiem* (1927). In their very differences they are this poet, flower and essence, all compact. In the first, his fantasies enchant not only with their delicacy but with their inherent truth. The squirrel "like a small gray coffee-pot," the half-metal tulip "clean as a lady, cool as glass," the city financier with his "table-land of shiny hat," the "flushed example" of the rose with her "dazzling inch of scent"—all these are seen, felt and communicated in such a way that the reader thrills with that emotion which is at the base of all enjoyment, the mingling of recognition and surprise. *Requiem* is the most reflective of all Wolfe's work and the nearest to a metaphysical synthesis. This symphonic and almost fugal creation retains Wolfe's exactitude of epithet embodied in a graver music whose pattern cannot be so easily defined. It is, in spite of small lapses, a major effort. *Others Abide* (1927) shows Wolfe as the happy translator of many verses from The Greek Anthology, a task for which his nimble technique was exactly fitted. James Stephens wrote, "It may reasonably be said that his version supersedes all others."

Although he is undoubtedly too prolific and his work suffers from a repetition of effects, Wolfe is always the poet in his glamorous use of language and his reaction to the nuances of his subject whatever it may be.

TULIP

Clean as a lady,
cool as glass,
fresh without fragrance
the tulip was.

The craftsman, who carved her
of metal, prayed:
"Live, oh thou lovely!"
Half metal she stayed.

THRUSHES

The City Financier
walks in the gardens,
stiffly, because of
his pride and his burdens.

The daisies, looking
up, observe
only a self-
respecting curve.

The thrushes only
see a flat
table-land
of shiny hat.

He looks importantly
about him,
while all the spring
goes on without him.

THE GRAY SQUIRREL

Like a small gray
coffee-pot,
sits the squirrel.
He is not

all he should be,
kills by dozens
trees, and eats
his red-brown cousins.

The keeper, on the
other hand
, who shot him, is
a Christian, and

loves his enemies,
which shows
the squirrel was not
one of those.

LAMB

The old bellwether
looked at the lamb,
as a gentleman looks
when he mutters "Damn!"

"If you jump and frisk,
you little fool,
you'll only end
by losing your wool.

"When I was a lamb
I always would
behave as like a sheep
as I could."

"Did you!" the lamb
replied with a leap,
"I always thought
you were born a sheep."

The park-keeper said
to the boy on the fence
"Let's have less
of your impudence!

"Off with you now,
and do as you're bade,
or you'll end in prison.
When I was a lad . . ."

THE LILAC

Who thought of the lilac?
"I," dew said,
"I made up the lilac
out of my head."

"She made up the lilac!
Pooh!" thrilled a linnet,
and each dew-note had a
lilac in it.

THE ROSE

Why should a man
, though six foot tall,
think he matters
at all, at all?

and, though he live
for seventy years,
does he suppose that
any one cares?

Rather let me
to him propose
the flushed example
of the rose,

who, with her dazzling
inch of scent,
a summer's day
weighs imminent

upon the spirit
entranced, and goes
richer with that
than he with those.

LABURNUM

Laburnum hangs
her golden fleece
through a thousand
lattices.

In the silken
flosses caught
struggles Spring,
the Argonaut.

THINGS LOVELIER

You cannot dream
Things lovelier

Than the first love
I had of her.

Nor air is any
By magic shaken
As her first breath in
The first kiss taken.

And who, in dreaming,
Understands
Her hands stretched like
A blind man's hands?

Open, trembling,
Wise they were—
You cannot dream
Things lovelier.

GREEN CANDLES

"There's some one at the door," said gold candlestick:
"Let her in quick, let her in quick!"
"There is a small hand groping at the handle.
Why don't you turn it?" asked green candle.

"Don't go, don't go," said the Heppelwhite chair,
"Lest you find a strange lady there."
"Yes, stay where you are," whispered the white wall:
"There is nobody there at all."

"I know her little foot," gray carpet said:
"Who but I should know her light tread?"
"She shall come in," answered the open door,
"And not," said the room, "go out any more."

QUEEN VICTORIA

Queen Victoria's
statue is
the work of her
daughter Beatrice.

The shape's all wrong,
and the crown don't fit,
but—bless her old heart!
she was proud of it.

LOVE IS A KEEPER OF SWANS

Love is a keeper of swans!
Helen! amid what dark wherries
are you steering the silver boat,
that for all the love of Paris,
and his lips against your throat,
passed out of Troy with windless vans?

And, fairest of Italians,
where do you glimmer, Beatrice?
What light of heaven stains your wings
with gold that were all fleur de lys?
And do you hear when Dante sings?
"Love is a keeper of swans."

Love is a keeper of swans.
Have you left the barren plain,
and stormed a gold-eagle's eyrie?
Queen-swan of the eagle strain,
what mountain has you, Mary?
And is its name, as ever, still romance?

And you, bright cynet of immortal Hans,
you need not join your sisters yet.
You have all time. Why should you hasten?
What though the lake with reeds be set,
one reed is murmuring, oh, listen!
"Love is a keeper of swans."

MAN

The feathers in a fan
are not so frail as man;
the green embossèd leaf
than man is no more brief.
His life is not so loud
as the passing of a cloud;

his death is quieter
than harebells when they stir.
The years that have no form
and substance are as warm,
and space has hardly less
supreme an emptiness.
And yet man being frail
does on himself prevail,
and with a single thought
can bring the world to naught,
as being brief he still
bends to his fleeting will
all time and makes of it
the shadow of his wit.
Soundless in life and death
although he vanisheth,
the echo of a song
makes all the stars a gong.
Cold, void, and yet the grim
darkness is hot with him,
and space is but the span
of the long love of man.

THE WATERS OF LIFE

When, hardly moving, you decorate night's hush
with the slim pencil of your grace, retrieving
the clean flat stroke of some old Grecian brush
that painted dancers fair beyond believing;

when, leaning back the harvest of your hair
under the moon with beauty as still as hers,
your body's wonder writes upon the air
the perfect cadence of consummate verse,

I think, if this upon the air be shaken,
brief as a falling blossom, it can but be
that Time records, by beauty overtaken,
in one gold instant, immortality,

and that the patterns you weave upon the night
have such swift passion, such essential heat,
that all the painter sees, the poet can write,
are but pale shadows of your dancing feet.

ILIAD

False dreams, all false,
mad heart, were yours.
The word, and nought else,
in time endures.
Not you long after,
perished and mute,
will last, but the defter
viol and lute.
Sweetly they'll trouble
the listeners
with the cold dropped pebble
of painless verse.
Not you will be offered,
but the poet's false pain.
You have loved and suffered,
mad heart, in vain.
What love doth Helen
or Paris have
where they lie still in
a nameless grave?
Her beauty's a wraith,
and the boy Paris
muffles in death
his mouth's cold cherries.
Yes! these are less,
that were love's summer,
than one gold phrase
of old blind Homer.
Not Helen's wonder
nor Paris stirs,
but the bright, untender
hexameters.
And thus, all passion
is nothing made,
but a star to flash in
an Iliad.
Mad heart, you were wrong!
No love of yours,
but only what's sung,
when love's over, endures.

Shane Leslie, the most distinguished son of Sir John Leslie, was born at Swan Park, Monaghan, Ireland, in 1885, and was educated at Eton, the University of Paris and King's College, Cambridge. He worked for a time among the Irish poor and was interested in the Celtic revival. During the greater part of a year he lectured in the United States, marrying an American, Marjorie Ide.

Leslie has been editor of *The Dublin Review* since 1916. He is the author of several volumes on Irish political matters, as well as *The End of a Chapter* (revised in 1917) and *Verses in Peace and War* (1916). Since 1922 Leslie has devoted himself to novels and biographies, the best of the latter being *George the Fourth* (1926) and *The Skull of Swift* (1928). The chief characteristics of his verse are an imaginative sweep and (as in "The Pater of the Cannon") a grimly ironic twist.

FLEET STREET

I never see the newsboys run
  Amid the whirling street,
  With swift untiring feet,
To cry the latest venture done,
But I expect one day to hear
  Them cry the crack of doom
  And risings from the tomb,
With great Archangel Michael near;
And see them running from the Fleet
  As messengers of God,
  With Heaven's tidings shod
About their brave unwearied feet.

THE PATER OF THE CANNON

Father of the thunder,
  Flinger of the flame,
Searing stars asunder,
  Hallowed be Thy Name!

By the sweet-sung quiring
  Sister bullets hum,
By our fiercest firing,
  May Thy Kingdom come!

By Thy strong apostle
Of the Maxim gun,
By his pentecostal
Flame, *Thy Will be done!*

Give us, Lord, good feeding
To Thy battles sped—
Flesh, white grained and bleeding,
Give for daily bread!

FRANCES CORNFORD

Frances (Darwin) Cornford, daughter of Sir Francis Darwin, the third son of Charles Darwin, was born in 1886 at Cambridge. She married Francis Macdonald Cornford, Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1909.

Her first volume, *Poems* (1910), though unaffected, showed little trace of individuality. With *Spring Morning* (1915) a much more distinct personality expressed itself. Hers is a firmly realized, clean-edged verse; a clarity of utterance which is also found in the more suggestive *Autumn Midnight* (1923). Her later verse in *Different Days* (1928) is no less spontaneous than the simple "A Wasted Day," the acute and onomatopoetic "The Watch," and the delightfully mocking triolet "To a Fat Lady Seen from the Train." It is, however, more measured; gravity has been added without the loss of charm. Whether grave or mocking Mrs. Cornford's tone maintains a quiet distinction.

THE COUNTRY BEDROOM

My room's a square and candle-lighted boat,
In the surrounding depths of night afloat.
My windows are the portholes, and the seas
The sound of rain on the dark apple-trees.

Sea monster-like beneath, an old horse blows
A snort of darkness from his sleeping nose,
Below, among drowned daisies. Far off, hark!
Far off, one owl amidst the waves of dark.

TO A FAT LADY SEEN FROM THE TRAIN

O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
  Missing so much and so much?
O fat white woman whom nobody loves,
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves
  And shivering sweet to the touch?
O why do you walk through the fields in gloves,
  Missing so much and so much?

THE WATCH

I wakened on my hot, hard bed;
Upon the pillow lay my head;
Beneath the pillow I could hear
My little watch was ticking clear.
I thought the throbbing of it went
Like my continual discontent;
I thought it said in every tick:
I am so sick, so sick, so sick;
O death, come quick, come quick, come quick,
Come quick, come quick, come quick, come quick. . . .

A WASTED DAY

I spoiled the day;
  Hotly, in haste
All the calm hours
  I gashed and defaced.

Let me forget,
  Let me embark
—Sleep for my boat—
  And sail through the dark.

Till a new day
  Heaven shall send,
Whole as an apple,
  Kind as a friend.

THE UNBESEECHABLE

(*To be set to music*)

"Time stands still
With gazing on her face,"
Sang Dowland to his lute,
Full of courtly grace.

Now that his musician's face
And her face are dust,
Still I cry, stand still:
Still cry I must.

Stand still, Time,
Hold, hold your pace;
Stiller stand than the smile
On Pharaoh's face.

Stiller than December's frost
That takes the heart with wonder,
Or the pause that comes between
Lightning and thunder.

Time, stand still,
Hush now your tread,
Stiller, stiller than a room
Where lies the sheeted dead.

Where, though it's busy noon,
Naught comes or goes;
Where the tree of endless peace
To the ceiling grows.

O Time, Time—
Stark and full of pain
Why drag me into space,
A dog upon a chain?

I who would float with you,
A ship sailing white,
Who cannot tell which power is hers,
And which the wind's delight.

So my refreshèd soul
Time would adore,
If for one moment's breath
Time were no more.

But, with Dowland's broken lute
And his forgotten rhyme,
Still I cry, Stand still,
Stand still, Time.

THE HILLS

Out of the complicated house, come I
To walk beneath the sky.
Here mud and stones and turf, here everything
Is mutely comforting.
Now hung upon the twigs and thorns appear
A host of lovely rain-drops cold and clear.
And on the bank
Or deep in brambly hedges dank
The small birds nip about, and say:
"Brothers, the Spring is not so far away!"
The hills like mother-giantesses old
Lie in the cold,
And with a complete patience, let
The cows come cropping on their bosoms wet,
And even tolerate that such as I
Should wander by
With paltry leathern heel which cannot harm
Their bodies' calm;
And, with a heart they cannot know, to bless
The enormous power of their peacefulness.

T. E. HULME

T. E. Hulme was born in 1886, and was educated at Cambridge where he distinguished himself in philosophy. Coming to London, he was soon established, becoming the intellectual stimulus if not the leader of a group of writers, painters and thinkers, all of whom paid posthumous tribute to his genius. Entering the War, he was killed in action in 1917.

It is doubtful whether any writer of his generation considered theories of expression more seriously than Hulme. He distrusted the word *per se*, regarding it as a thing with no inner reality. As Herbert Read says, "Against words he opposed the *image* as a unit and the *analogy* as an instrument of thought. Poetry, in the broad sense of imaginative literature, becomes the only kind of logic worthy of consideration, and the art of poetry the only science of meaning. Thought, he argued, was prior to its expression in language, being the simultaneous presentation to the mind of two different images; thought was the recognition of their analogy. The poet is he who can awaken this analogy in the mind of the reader. There can be no question of exact conveyance, because language is a feeble instrument. The poet only suggests, and his suggestion falls flat on a mind that is not in some manner prepared for this sudden fertilization. But suggestion is not produced by 'eye-blur': poetry is a mosaic of exactly defined words, and suggestion must not be related to indefiniteness, but is the most exact conveyance possible of a vivid visual image."

Although Hulme remained a theorist, he carried his ideas concerning a clearer verbal tone into infrequent practice. It was Hulme, aided by Pound, who was responsible for the Imagist movement, and if Hulme's attempts, as Read says, "have remained comparatively obscure because they have not been the vehicle of any momentous intelligence, that does not alter the validity of the ideas or the possibility of their general application." Five of Hulme's image-built poems appeared at the end of Pound's *Ripostes* (1915) gravely entitled "The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme."

After Hulme's death Herbert Read undertook the labor of deciphering and editing his manuscripts. Most of the material appeared under the title *Speculations* in 1924. A supplementary pamphlet, *Notes on Language and Style*, also collated by Read, was published as one of the University of Washington Chapbooks in 1929.

AUTUMN

A touch of cold in the Autumn night—
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not speak, but nodded,
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.

CONVERSION

Lighthearted I walked into the valley wood
In the time of hyacinths,
Till beauty like a scented cloth
Cast over, stifled me. I was bound
Motionless and faint of breath
By loveliness that is her own eunuch.

Now pass I to the final river
Ignominiously, in a sack, without sound,
As any peeping Turk to the Bosphorus.

THE EMBANKMENT

(*The fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a cold, bitter night*)

Once, in finesse of fiddles found I ecstasy,
In the flash of gold heels on the hard pavement.
Now see I
That warmth's the very stuff of poesy.
Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Siegfried (Loraine) Sassoon was born September 8, 1886. He was educated at Marlborough and Clare College, Cambridge, and, during the War, was a captain in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. He fought three times in France, once in Palestine, winning the Military Cross for bringing in wounded on the battlefield.

Sassoon's literary development seems as contradictory as it is curious. Descended from Persian Jews on his father's side, from a traditional English country family on his mother's, Sassoon's boyhood was spent alternating between fox- and rhyme-hunting. He was divided between a love of rugged activity and a fondness for pale, Dowsonesque lyrics. Several volumes, ranging from parody to the verge of preciosity were issued anonymously and privately printed. A sense of their unreality drove him to a larger work, a poem which, beginning as a burlesque of Masefield, ended in

serious self-expression. With *The Old Huntsman* (1917) Sassoon came into his own idiom, taking his place immediately as "one of England's most brilliant rising stars." The first poem, a pseudo-Masefieldian monologue, was followed by a series of war poems, undisguised in their tragedy and bitterness. Every line of these quivering stanzas bore the mark of a sensitive and outraged nature; there was scarcely a phrase that did not protest against the "glorification" and false glamour of war.

Counter-Attack appeared in 1918. In this volume, Sassoon turned from ordered loveliness to the gigantic brutality of war. At heart a lyric idealist, the bloody years intensified and twisted his tenderness till what was stubborn and satiric in him forced its way to the top. In *Counter-Attack* Sassoon found his angry outlet. Most of these poems are choked with passion; many of them are torn out, roots and all, from the very core of an intense conviction. They rush on, not so much because of the poet's art but almost in spite of it. A suave utterance, a neatly-joined structure would be out of place and even inexcusable in poems like "The Rear-Guard," the title-poem, "Base Details," "Does It Matter?"—verses that are composed of love, fever and indignation.

Could Sassoon see nothing uplifting in war? His friend, Robert Nichols, another poet and soldier, speaks for him in a preface. "Let no one ever," Nichols quotes Sassoon as saying, "from henceforth say one word in any way countenancing war. It is dangerous even to speak of how here and there the individual may gain some hardship of soul by it. For war is hell, and those who institute it are criminals. Were there even anything to say for it, it should not be said; for its spiritual disasters far outweigh any of its advantages. . . ." Nichols adds his approval to these sentences, saying, "For myself, this is the truth. War does not ennoble, it degrades."

Early in 1920, Sassoon visited America. At the same time, he brought out his *Picture Show* (1920), a vigorous answer to those who feared that Sassoon had "written himself out" or had begun to burn away in his own fire. Had Rupert Brooke lived, he might have written many of these lacerated but somehow exalted lines. "The Dug-Out" and "Every One Sang" are splendid examples of how much poignance and (in the latter) winged joy can be held in less than a dozen lines. Sassoon's three volumes are the most vital and unsparing records of the war we have had. They synthesize in poetry what Barbusse's *Under Fire* and Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* spread out in panoramic prose or Sheriff's *Journey's End* compacted in his stripped tragedy.

Recreations, a privately distributed volume, printed at Christmas, 1923, for his friends, shows Sassoon in a more playfully intel-

lectual vein. Another, even more strictly limited publication, *Lingual Exercises for Advanced Vocabularians,* was issued in 1925. Most of the contents of the two volumes appeared in *Satirical Poems* (1926). Less direct than his deeper notes, these poems display another interesting though not so compelling aspect of Sassoon's genius.

The Heart's Journey (1928) seems the work of another poet, but it is the essential Sassoon. Here is the distillation of the post-war years, of silence and sorrow, of long conflict and final unity. Here are the visionary ideals of youth sharpened and purified through pain; here is bitter knowledge saved from bitterness by the spirit of faith; here, in short, Sassoon's Songs of Innocence are mingled with his Songs of Experience. This spiritual autobiography reveals the old fire, but a fire subdued. It has dignity, a gentle ecstasy which places it in the line of great religious poetry. With almost monosyllabic simplicity of word and music, Sassoon shares the power of the mystic; he achieves a sense of identification with all things—be they inanimate objects like a lamp or a book, intangible concepts like music, or his fellowmen, living or dead—fusing every element in a rapt and universal love.

Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man (1928), first published anonymously, was awarded the two most coveted literary prizes in England: the Hawthornden Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1929. Here in a prose so straightforward as to seem bare, there is suffused a poetry, void of decoration, independent of diction, but implicit in Sassoon's tenderness and nobility. This volume with the later verse gives us the complete man, the mature and molded poet.

DREAMERS

Soldiers are citizens of death's gray land,
  Drawing no dividend from time's tomorrows.
In the great hour of destiny they stand,
  Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
  Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
  They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.

I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
  And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,

Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.

THE REAR-GUARD

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,
He winked his prying torch with patching glare
From side to side, and sniffed the unwholesome air.

Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know,
A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed;
And he, exploring fifty feet below
The rosy gloom of battle overhead.
Tripping, he grabbed the wall; saw some one lie
Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,
And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.
"I'm looking for headquarters." No reply.
"God blast your neck!" (For days he'd had no sleep.)
"Get up and guide me through this stinking place."
Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,
And flashed his beam across the livid face
Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore
Agony dying hard ten days before;
And fists of fingers clutched a blackening wound.
Alone he staggered on until he found
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.
At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

BASE DETAILS

If I were fierce and bald and short of breath,
I'd live with scarlet Majors at the Base,
And speed glum heroes up the line to death.
You'd see me with my puffy petulant face,

Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel,
Reading the Roll of Honor. "Poor young chap,"
I'd say—"I used to know his father well.
Yes, we've lost heavily in this last scrap."
And when the war is done and youth stone dead,
I'd toddle safely home and die—in bed.

ATTACK

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
In the wild purple of the glowering sun
Smoldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to meet the bristling fire.
Lines of gray, muttering faces, masked with fear,
They leave their trenches, going over the top,
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,
Flounders in mud. O Jesu, make it stop!

COUNTER-ATTACK

We'd gained our first objective hours before
While dawn broke like a face with blinking eyes,
Pallid, unshaved and thirsty, blind with smoke.
Things seemed all right at first. We held their line,
With bombers posted, Lewis guns well placed,
And clink of shovels deepening the shallow trench.
The place was rotten with dead; green clumsy legs
High-booted, sprawled and groveled along the saps;
And trunks, face downward in the sucking mud,
Wallowed like trodden sand-bags, loosely filled;
And naked, sodden buttocks, mats of hair,
Bulged, clotted heads, slept in the plastering slime.
And then the rain began—the jolly old rain!

A yawning soldier knelt against the bank,
Staring across the morning blear with fog;

He wondered when the Allemands would get busy;
And then, of course, they started with five-nines
Traversing, sure as fate, and never a dud.
Mute in the clamor of shells he watched them burst
Spouting dark earth and wire with gusts from hell,
While posturing giants dissolved in drifts of smoke.
He crouched and flinched, dizzy with galloping fear,
Sick for escape,—loathing the strangled horror
And butchered, frantic gestures of the dead.

An officer came blundering down the trench:
"Stand-to and man the fire-step!" On he went. . . .
Gasping and bawling, "Fire-step . . . counter-attack!"
Then the haze lifted. Bombing on the right
Down the old sap: machine guns on the left;
And stumbling figures looming out in front.
"O Christ, they're coming at us!" Bullets spat,
And he remembered his rifle . . . rapid fire . . .
And started blazing wildly . . . then a bang
Crumpled and spun him sideways, knocked him out
To grunt and wriggle: none heeded him; he choked
And fought the flapping veils of smothering gloom,
Lost in a blurred confusion of yells and groans. . . .
Down, and down, and down, he sank and drowned,
Bleeding to death. The counter-attack had failed.

THE DUG-OUT

Why do you lie with your legs ungainly huddled,
And one arm bent across your sullen, cold,
Exhausted face? It hurts my heart to watch you,
Deep-shadowed from the candle's guttering gold;
And you wonder why I shake you by the shoulder;
Drowsy, you mumble and sigh and turn your head. . . .
You are too young to fall asleep for ever;
And when you sleep you remind me of the dead.

AFTERMATH

Have you forgotten yet? . . .
For the world's events have rumbled on since those gagged days,
Like traffic checked a while at the crossing of city ways:
And the haunted gap in your mind has filled with thoughts that flow
Like clouds in the lit heavens of life; and you're a man reprieved to go,
Taking your peaceful share of Time, with joy to spare.
But the past is just the same,—and War's a bloody game. . . .
Have you forgotten yet? . . .
Look down, and swear by the slain of the War that you'll never forget.

Do you remember the dark months you held the sector at Mametz,—
The nights you watched and wired and dug and piled sandbags on parapets?
Do you remember the rats; and the stench
Of corpses rotting in front of the front-line trench,—
And dawn coming, dirty-white, and chill with a hopeless rain?
Do you ever stop and ask, "Is it all going to happen again?"

Do you remember that hour of din before the attack,—
And the anger, the blind compassion that seized and shook you then
As you peered at the doomed and haggard faces of your men?
Do you remember the stretcher-cases lurching back
With dying eyes and lolling heads, those ashen-gray
Masks of the lads who once were keen and kind and gay?

Have you forgotten yet? . . .
Look up, and swear by the green of the Spring that you'll never forget!

EVERY ONE SANG

Every one suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight

As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark green fields; on; on;
and out of sight.

Every one's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears, and horror
Drifted away. . . . O, but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the
singing will never be done.

FALLING ASLEEP

Voices moving about in the quiet house:
Thud of feet and a muffled shutting of doors:
Every one yawning. Only the clocks are alert.

Out in the night there's autumn-smelling gloom
Crowded with whispering trees; across the park
A hollow cry of hounds like lonely bells:
And I know that the clouds are moving across the moon;
The low, red, rising moon. Now herons call
And wrangle by their pool; and hooting owls
Sail from the wood above pale stooks of oats.

Waiting for sleep, I drift from thoughts like these;
And where today was dream-like, build my dreams.
Music . . . there was a bright white room below,
And some one singing a song about a soldier,
One hour, two hours ago: and soon the song
Will be "*last night*": but now the beauty swings
Across my brain, ghost of remembered chords
Which still can make such radiance in my dream
That I can watch the marching of my soldiers,
And count their faces; faces; sunlit faces.

Falling asleep . . . the herons, and the hounds. . . .
September in the darkness; and the world
I've known; all fading past me into peace.

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

The wisdom of the world is this; to say "*There is*
No other wisdom but to gulp what time can give" . . .
To guard no inward vision winged wtih mysteries;
To hear no voices haunt the hurrying hours we live;
To keep no faith with ghostly friends; never to know
Vigils of sorrow crowned when loveless passions fade . . .
From wisdom such as this to find my gloom I go,
Companioned by those powers who keep me unafraid.

CONCLUSION

An image dance of change
Throngs my dim-sighted flesh,
To music's air-built mesh
Move thoughts forever strange.
I am so woven of sense
And subtlety uncharted
That I must vanish hence
Blind-souled and twilight-hearted.

Soon death the hooded lover
Shall touch my house of clay,
And life-lit eyes discover
That in the warbling gray
I have been early waking,
And while the dawn was breaking
Have stolen afield to find
That secrecy which quivers
Beyond the skies and rivers
And cities of the mind.

Till then my thought shall strive
That living I may not lose
The wonder of being alive,
Nor Time's least gift refuse.
For, though the end be night,
This wonder and this white
Astonishment of sight

Make hours of magic shine;
And heaven's a blaze and bloom
Of transience and divine
Inheritance of doom.

EVERYMAN

The weariness of life that has no will
To climb the steepening hill:
The sickness of the soul for sleep, and to be still.

And then once more the impassioned pygmy fist
Clenched cloudward and defiant;
The pride that would prevail, the doomed protagonist,
Grappling the ghostly giant.

Victim and venturer, turn by turn; and then
Set free to be again
Companion in repose with those who once were men.

LIMITATIONS

If you could crowd them into forty lines!
Yes; you can do it once you get a start:
All that you want is waiting in your head,
For long ago you've learnt if off by heart.

Begin: your mind's the room where you have slept,
(Don't pause for rhymes), till twilight woke you early.
The window stands wide-open, as it stood
When tree-tops loomed enchanted for a child
Hearing the dawn's first thrushes through the wood
Warbling (you know the words) serene and wild.

You've said it all before: you dreamed of Death,
A dim Apollo in the bird-voiced breeze
That drifts across the morning veiled with showers,
While golden weather shines among dark trees.

You've got your limitations; let them sing,
And all your life will waken with a cry:
Why should you halt when rapture's on the wing
And you've no limit but the cloud-flocked sky? . . .

But some chap shouts, "Here, stop it; that's been done!"
As God might holloa to the rising sun,
And then relent, because the glorying rays
Remind Him of green-glinting Eden days,
And Adam's trustful eyes as he looks up
From carving eagles on his beechwood cup.

Young Adam knew his job; he could condense
Life to an eagle from the unknown immense. . . .
Go on, whoever you are, your lines can be
A whisper in the music from the weirs
Of song that plunge and tumble toward the sea
That is the uncharted mercy of our tears.

. . . . . .

I told you it was easy! . . . Words are fools
Who follow blindly, once they get a lead.
But thoughts are kingfishers that haunt the pools
Of quiet; seldom-seen: and all you need
Is just that flash of joy above your dream.
So, when those forty platitudes are done,
You'll hear a bird-note calling from the stream
That wandered through your childhood; and the sun
Will strike old flaming wonder from the waters. . . .
And there'll be forty lines not yet begun.

GRANDEUR OF GHOSTS

When I have heard small talk about great men
I climb to bed; light my two candles; then
Consider what was said; and put aside
What Such-a-one remarked and Someone-else replied.

They have spoken lightly of my deathless friends,
(Lamps for my gloom, hands guiding where I stumble,)
Quoting, for shallow conversational ends,
What Shelley shrilled, what Blake once wildly muttered. . . .

How can they use such names and not be humble?
I have sat silent; angry at what they uttered.
The dead bequeathed them life; the dead have said
What these can only memorize and mumble.

ALONE

"*When I'm alone*"—the words tripped off his tongue
As though to be alone were nothing strange.
"*When I was young,*" he said; "*when I was young. . . .*"

I thought of age, and loneliness, and change.
I thought how strange we grow when we're alone,
And how unlike the selves that meet and talk,
And blow the candles out, and say good night.
Alone. . . . The word is life endured and known.
It is the stillness where our spirits walk
And all but inmost faith is overthrown.

RUPERT BROOKE

Possibly the most famous of the younger Georgians, Rupert Brooke was born at Rugby August 3, 1887, his father being assistant master at the school. As a youth, Brooke was fastidious, finicky in dress, but keenly interested in athletics, playing cricket, football, and tennis, swimming as well as most professionals. He was six feet tall, his finely molded head topped with a crown of loose hair of lively brown: "a golden young Apollo," said Edward Thomas. Another friend of his wrote, "To look at, he was part of the youth of the world." His beauty encouraged a naturally romantic disposition; his poems are a blend of delight in the splendor of actuality and disillusion in a loveliness that dies. The shadow of John Donne lies over many of his early and more than a few of his later pages.

The bored elegance, the occasional cynicisms, were purged, when after several years of travel (he had been to Germany, Italy and Honolulu) the war came, turning Brooke away from

> "A world grown old and cold and weary . . .
> And half men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
> And all the little emptiness of love."

Brooke enlisted with a relief that was like a rebirth; he sought new energy in the struggle "where the worst friend and enemy is but Death." After seeing service in Belgium, 1914, he spent the following winter in a training-camp in Dorsetshire and sailed with the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in February, 1915, to take part in the unfortunate Dardanelles Campaign.

Brooke never reached his destination. He died of blood-poison

at Skyros in the Aegean, April 23, 1915. His early death was one of England's great literary losses; Lascelles Abercrombie, W. W. Gibson (with both of whom he had been associated on the quarterly, *New Numbers*), Walter de la Mare, Winston Spencer Churchill, and a host of others united to pay tribute to the most brilliant and passionate of the younger poets.

Brooke's sonnet-sequence, *1914* (from which "The Soldier" is taken), appeared with prophetic irony, a few weeks before his death. It contains the accents of immortality. "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester," "Heaven" and "Fish" are characteristic of the lighter and more playful side of Brooke's temperament. The metaphysician, not yet free of Donne, speaks in the mingled fancy and philosophy of "Dining-Room Tea" and "Second Best." Both these phases are combined in "The Great Lover," of which Abercrombie has written, "It is life he loves, and not in any abstract sense, but all the infinite little familiar details of life, remembered and catalogued with delightful zest."

Brooke published only two volumes during his lifetime. After his death, both volumes, with several posthumous poems, were issued as *Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, with a Memoir, in 1915. With a few exceptions, when Brooke yielded to the merely clever, his poetry is alert with the sparkle of his personality. It is the self-aware, self-examining mind that rules his emotions; his verse is a triumph of the intellectual imagination. "The theme of his poetry," says Walter de la Mare, "is the life of the mind, the senses, the feelings—life here and now. . . . His world stands out sharp and distinct, like the towers and pinnacles of a city under the light of a sunny sky." Brooke's delight was not in the shadows of revery and meditation, but in the swift play of ideas, in energetic action and reaction.

Thus Brooke was as thorough in his inconsistencies as in his sincerities. Impulse was his god—and his goad. He worshiped glamor and turned from it in revulsion, in a kind of sea- and beauty-sickness; he celebrated (in "Dust") the immortality of love and (in "Kindliness" and the sonnet already quoted) ridiculed its empty impermanence; turned from the intellect to sheer imagination—and abandoned fantasy for an ordered philosophy. His later work indicates that Brooke had tired of shifting extremes. It is impossible to predict what integration might have come with maturity. He was dead at twenty-seven.

THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendor of Love's praise,

The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable godhead of delight?
Love is a flame:—we have beaconed the world's night.
A city:—and we have built it, these and I.
An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. . . .

These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faëry dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such—

The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .
Dear names,
And thousand others throng to me! Royal flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing:
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mold;
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;—
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends now strangers. . . .
But the best I've known
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men, and dies.
Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give: that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed
Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

THE HILL

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old. . . ." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"
"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness! . . ." Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

DUST

When the white flame in us is gone,
  And we that lost the world's delight
Stiffen in darkness, left alone
  To crumble in our separate night;

When your swift hair is quiet in death,
  And through the lips corruption thrust
Has stilled the labor of my breath—
  When we are dust, when we are dust!—

Not dead, not undesirous yet,
  Still sentient, still unsatisfied,
We'll ride the air, and shine and flit,
  Around the places where we died,

And dance as dust before the sun,
  And light of foot, and unconfined,
Hurry from road to road, and run
  About the errands of the wind.

And every mote, on earth or air,
  Will speed and gleam down later days,
And like a secret pilgrim fare
  By eager and invisible ways,

Nor ever rest, nor ever lie,
Till, beyond thinking, out of view,
One mote of all the dust that's I
Shall meet one atom that was you.

Then in some garden hushed from wind,
Warm in a sunset's afterglow,
The lovers in the flowers will find
A sweet and strange unquiet grow

Upon the peace; and, past desiring,
So high a beauty in the air,
And such a light, and such a quiring,
And such a radiant ecstasy there,

They'll know not if it's fire, or dew,
Or out of earth, or in the height,
Singing, or flame, or scent, or hue,
Or two that pass, in light, to light,

Out of the garden higher, higher . . .
But in that instant they shall learn
The shattering fury of our fire,
And the weak passionless hearts will burn

And faint in that amazing glow,
Until the darkness close above;
And they will know—poor fools, they'll know!—
One moment, what it is to love.

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me;
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

HEAVEN

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be All, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry.
Mud unto Mud!—Death eddies near—
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,
Is wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And Paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.

And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

SECOND BEST

Here in the dark, O heart;
Alone with the enduring Earth, and Night,
And Silence, and the warm strange smell of clover;
Clear-visioned, though it break you; far apart
From the dead best, the dear and old delight;
Throw down your dreams of immortality,
O faithful, O foolish lover!
Here's peace for you, and surety; here the one
Wisdom—the truth!—"All day the good glad sun
Showers love and labor on you, wine and song;
The greenwood laughs, the wind blows, all day long
Till night." And night ends all things.
Then shall be
No lamp relumed in heaven, no voices crying,
Or changing lights, or dreams and forms that hover!
(And, heart, for all your sighing,
That gladness and those tears, are over, over. . . .)

And has the truth brought no new hope at all,
Heart, that you're weeping yet for Paradise?
Do they still whisper, the old weary cries?
"*'Mid youth and song, feasting and carnival,*
Through laughter, through the roses, as of old
Comes Death, on shadowy and relentless feet,
Death, unappeasable by prayer or gold;
Death is the end, the end!"
Proud, then, clear-eyed and laughing, go to greet
Death as a friend!

Exile of immortality, strongly wise,
Strain through the dark with undesirous eyes
To what may lie beyond it. Sets your star,
O heart, for ever! Yet, behind the night,
Waits for the great unborn, somewhere afar,
Some white tremendous daybreak. And the light,

Returning, shall give back the golden hours,
Ocean a windless level, Earth a lawn
Spacious and full of sunlit dancing-places,
And laughter, and music, and among the flowers,
The gay child-hearts of men, and the child-faces
O heart, in the great dawn!

THE BUSY HEART

Now that we've done our best and worst, and parted,
I would fill my mind with thoughts that will not rend.
(O heart, I do not dare go empty-hearted)
I'll think of Love in books, Love without end;
Women with child, content; and old men sleeping;
And wet strong plowlands, scarred for certain grain;
And babes that weep, and so forget their weeping;
And the young heavens, forgetful after rain;
And evening hush, broken by homing wings;
And Song's nobility, and Wisdom holy,
That live, we dead. I would think of a thousand things,
Lovely and durable, and taste them slowly,
One after one, like tasting a sweet food.
I have need to busy my heart with quietude.

DINING-ROOM TEA

When you were there, and you, and you,
Happiness crowned the night; I too,
Laughing and looking, one of all,
I watched the quivering lamplight fall
On plate and flowers and pouring tea
And cup and cloth; and they and we
Flung all the dancing moments by
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,
Improvident, unmemoried;
And fitfully, and like a flame
The light of laughter went and came.
Proud in their careless transience moved
The changing faces that I loved.

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked upon your innocence.
For lifted clear and still and strange
From the dark woven flow of change
Under a vast and starless sky
I saw the immortal moment lie.
One instant I, an instant, knew
As God knows all. And it and you,
I, above Time, oh, blind! could see
In witless immortality.

I saw the marble cup; the tea,
Hung on the air, an amber stream;
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,
The painted flame, the frozen smoke.
No more the flooding lamplight broke
On flying eyes and lips and hair;
But lay, but slept unbroken there,
On stiller flesh, and body breathless,
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,
And words on which no silence grew.
Light was more alive than you.

For suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked on your magnificence.
I saw the stillness and the light,
And you, august, immortal, white,
Holy and strange; and every glint
Posture and jest and thought and tint
Freed from the mask of transiency,
Triumphant in eternity,
Immote, immortal.

Dazed at length
Human eyes grew, mortal strength
Wearied; and Time began to creep.
Change closed about me like a sleep.
Light glinted on the eyes I loved.
The cup was filled. The bodies moved.
The drifting petal came to ground.
The laughter chimed its perfect round,

The broken syllable was ended.
And I, so certain and so friended,
How could I cloud, or how distress,
The heaven of your unconsciousness?
Or shake at Time's sufficient spell,
Stammering of lights unutterable?
The eternal holiness of you,
The timeless end, you never knew,
The peace that lay, the light that shone.
You never knew that I had gone
A million miles away, and stayed
A million years. The laughter played
Unbroken round me; and the jest
Flashed on. And we that knew the best
Down wonderful hours grew happier yet.
I sang at heart, and talked, and ate,
And lived from laugh to laugh, I too,
When you were there, and you, and you.

THE OLD VICARAGE, GRANTCHESTER

(*Café des Westens, Berlin. May, 1912*)

Just now the lilac is in bloom,
All before my little room;
And in my flower-beds, I think,
Smile the carnation and the pink;
And down the borders, well I know,
The poppy and the pansy blow . . .
Oh! there the chestnuts, summer through,
Beside the river make for you
A tunnel of green gloom, and sleep
Deeply above; and green and deep
The stream mysterious glides beneath,
Green as a dream and deep as death.
—Oh, damn! I know it! and I know
How the May fields all golden show,
And when the day is young and sweet,
Glide gloriously the bare feet
That run to bathe . . .
Du lieber Gott!

Here am I, sweating, sick, and hot,
And there the shadowed waters fresh
Lean up to embrace the naked flesh.
Temperamentvoll German Jews
Drink beer around;—and *there* the dews
Are soft beneath a morn of gold.
Here tulips bloom as they are told;
Unkempt about those hedges blows
An English unofficial rose;
And there the unregulated sun
Slopes down to rest when day is done,
And wakes a vague unpunctual star,
A slippered Hesper; and there are
Meads towards Haslingfield and Coton
Where *das Betreten's* not *verboten.*

εἴθε γενοίμην . . . would I were
In Grantchester, in Grantchester!—
Some, it may be, can get in touch
With Nature there, or Earth, or such.
And clever modern men have seen
A Faun a-peeping through the green,
And felt the Classics were not dead,
To glimpse a Naiad's reedy head,
Or hear the Goat-foot piping low; . . .
But these are things I do not know.
I only know that you may lie
Day long and watch the Cambridge sky,
And, flower-lulled in sleepy grass,
Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,
Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchester, in Grantchester. . . .
Still in the dawnlit waters cool
His ghostly Lordship swims his pool,
And tries the strokes, essays the tricks,
Long learnt on Hellespont, or Styx.
Dan Chaucer hears his river still
Chatter beneath a phantom mill.
Tennyson notes, with studious eye,
How Cambridge waters hurry by . . .

And in that garden, black and white,
Creep whispers through the grass all night;
And spectral dance, before the dawn,
A hundred Vicars down the lawn;
Curates, long dust, will come and go
On lissom, clerical, printless toe;
And oft between the boughs is seen
The sly shade of a Rural Dean . . .
Till, at a shiver in the skies,
Vanishing with Satanic cries,
The prim ecclesiastic rout
Leaves but a startled sleeper-out,
Gray heavens, the first bird's drowsy calls,
The falling house that never falls.

God! I will pack, and take a train,
And get me to England once again!
For England's the one land, I know,
Where men with Splendid Hearts may go;
And Cambridgeshire, of all England,
The shire for Men who Understand;
And of *that* district I prefer
The lovely hamlet Grantchester.
For Cambridge people rarely smile,
Being urban, squat, and packed with guile;
And Royston men in the far South
Are black and fierce and strange of mouth;
At Over they fling oaths at one,
And worse than oaths at Trumpington,
And Ditton girls are mean and dirty,
And there's none in Harston under thirty,
And folks in Shelford and those parts
Have twisted lips and twisted hearts,
And Barton men make Cockney rhymes,
And Coton's full of nameless crimes,
And things are done you'd not believe
At Madingley on Christmas Eve.
Strong men have run for miles and miles,
When one from Cherry Hinton smiles,
Strong men have blanched, and shot their wives,
Rather than send them to St. Ives;

Strong men have cried like babes, bydam,
To hear what happened in Babraham.
But Grantchester! ah, Grantchester!
There's peace and holy quiet there,
Great clouds along pacific skies,
And men and women with straight eyes,
Lithe children lovelier than a dream,
A bosky wood, a slumb'rous stream,
And little kindly winds that creep
Round twilight corners, half asleep.
In Grantchester their skins are white;
They bathe by day, they bathe by night;
The women there do all they ought;
The men observe the Rules of Thought;
They love the Good; they worship Truth;
They laugh uproariously in youth;
(And when they get to feeling old,
They up and shoot themselves, I'm told) . .

Ah God! to see the branches stir
Across the moon at Grantchester!
To smell the thrilling-sweet and rotten
Unforgettable, unforgotten
River-smell, and hear the breeze
Sobbing in the little trees.
Say, do the elm-clumps greatly stand
Still guardians of that holy land?
The chestnuts shade, in reverend dream,
The yet unacademic stream?
Is dawn a secret shy and cold
Anadyomene, silver-gold?
And sunset still a golden sea
From Haslingfield to Madingley?
And after, ere the night is born,
Do hares come out about the corn?
Oh, is the water sweet and cool,
Gentle and brown, above the pool?
And laughs the immortal river still
Under the mill, under the mill?
Say, is there Beauty yet to find?
And Certainty? And Quiet kind?

Deep meadows yet, for to forget
The lies, and truths, and pain? . . . oh! yet
Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for tea?

WINIFRED M. LETTS

Winifred M. Letts was born in Ireland and her early work concerned itself almost entirely with the humor and pathos found in her immediate surroundings. *Songs from Leinster* (1913) is her most characteristic collection; a volume full of the poetry of simple people and humble souls. She has called herself "a back-door sort of bard" and the appellation is not inaccurate for she is particularly effective in the old ballad measure and in quaint portrayal of Irish peasants rather than of Gaelic kings and pagan heroes. She has also written three novels, five books for children, two plays produced at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and a later volume of verse, *Hallow E'en* (1916).

GRANDEUR

Poor Mary Byrne is dead,
An' all the world may see
Where she lies upon her bed
Just as fine as quality.

She lies there still and white,
With candles either hand
That'll guard her through the night:
Sure she never was so grand.

She holds her rosary,
Her hands clasped on her breast.
Just as dacint as can be
In the habit she's been dressed.

In life her hands were red
With every sort of toil,
But they're white now she is dead,
An' they've sorra mark of soil.

The neighbors come and go,
They kneel to say a prayer,
I wish herself could know
Of the way she's lyin' there.

It was work from morn till night,
And hard she earned her bread:
But I'm thinking she's a right
To be aisy now she's dead.

When other girls were gay,
At wedding or at fair,
She'd be toiling all the day,
Not a minyit could she spare.

An' no one missed her face,
Or sought her in a crowd,
But today they throng the place
Just to see her in her shroud.

The creature in her life
Drew trouble with each breath;
She was just "poor Jim Byrne's wife"—
But she's lovely in her death.

I wish the dead could see
The splendor of a wake,
For it's proud herself would be
Of the keening that they make.

Och! little Mary Byrne,
You welcome every guest,
Is it now you take your turn
To be merry with the rest?

I'm thinking you'd be glad,
Though the angels make your bed,
Could you see the care we've had
To respect you—now you're dead.

Joseph (Mary) Plunkett was born in Ireland in 1887 and devoted himself to the cause that compelled so many martyrs. He gave his hours and finally his life in an effort to establish the freedom of his country. He was one of the leaders of that group of Nationalists which included MacDonagh and Padraic Pearse. (See page 446.) Had he been allowed to develop his gifts as singer, there is no doubt that he would have added a luster to the roll of Irish poets. Even the two brief lyrics reprinted here show (*vide* "Poppies" in particular) that Plunkett possessed a subtle craftsmanship to express his tender mysticism.

After the Easter Week uprising in Dublin in 1916, Plunkett and his compatriots were arrested by the British Government and executed.

I SEE HIS BLOOD UPON THE ROSE

I see His blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of His eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice—and carven by His power,
Rocks are His written words.

All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

POPPIES

O Sower of sorrow,
From the seed of your sowing
Tomorrow the mower
The wheat will be mowing.

O Reaper of ruth,
Mid the roots of your reaping
Springs the truth that in sleep
Bears the fruit of all sleeping.

O Binder of sheaves
That are loose for your binding,
Withered leaves you shall find
And shall lose after finding.

EDWIN MUIR

Edwin Muir was born in Deerness, in the Orkney Islands, in 1887. He had practically no schooling in boyhood and none whatever after his fourteenth year, when his family moved to Glasgow and young Muir started work as a clerk. Although he is best known as a critic, Muir's first literary work to be published was in verse. Later, he contributed a series of prose aphorisms to *The New Age* which were published in book form under the title of *We Moderns* (1918), a volume which aroused the enthusiasm of critics as difficult to impress as H. L. Mencken.

In 1919, Muir became assistant editor of *The New Age*. Two years later, he gave up all editorial work, and went to live in Central Europe. It was while living in Austria that his *Latitudes* (1924), a collection of essays playful and yet profound appeared, attracting a greater audience than Muir had ever reached. Although his verse, *First Poems* (1926), is little known, it is Muir's favorite medium and reveals the same freshness of feeling as his prose.

Besides his poetry, Muir has established himself as one of the most sympathetic translators from the German, especially successful in the case of Hauptmann and Feuchtwanger. His first novel, *The Marionette* appeared in 1927, his third and most important set of studies, *Transition*, in 1926.

THE ENCHANTED PRINCE

Here lying on the ancient mount,
  Through days grown stagnant and too rich,
My half-raised eyes keep sleepy count
  Of wild weeds springing in the ditch,

Of turf so quiet and so clean
  The sun's light seems more ancient there,
As if the softly slumbering green
  Had grown indifferent to the air.

And all worn smooth 'neath deadened years
Which have forgotten that they roll,
Though at its secret term appears
The lawful grass upon the knoll.

There lies the peace of ended toil
Heavy and rich, too rich, as though
A race were mingled with the soil
And could no more rise up and go.

A willow hangs above the vale,
Here at my foot, and I have sight,
Through twisted branches dusty pale,
Of distant hills in different light.

So inaccessible and so clear,
The houses gleam on every hill!
The silent valley tumbles sheer,
Like an abyss where time is still.

Yet here upon the enchanted mount
I look out towards the farther heights,
And, lost far onward, strive to count
Ambiguous shapes in shifting lights,

Till, where peaks battle in the haze,
In mortal fight without a cry,
Upon unnameable things I gaze,
And dragons rearing at the sky.

If now, turned back, I think again
That all these lines which heaved and strove
Just now, were quiet earth, I fain
Would perish of a boundless love. . . .

Here lying on the ancient mount,
Through days grown stagnant and too rich,
My heart is dust, the while I count
The wild weeds springing in the ditch.

GRASS

The vague immutable contour of the earth—
This insubstantial phantom of green hills
Which ever falling away forever change,
Perpetual mirage hung beyond Time's reach—
Is grass, which sets the round world in our sight.
Grass standing thick and still in soundless vales
No eye has seen, or straggling into wastes,
Beat down but spared by winds which tears up oaks;
Green in the sun, and beneath smothering mists,
Where each moist blade sweats one clear glistening drop;
Grass growing below huge rocks and round lone graves;
Climbing, a tiny host, up mountainsides;
Hanging on mist-locked keeps above dun lakes;
Tossing on low small islets on the tide,
Soft meadows mid the currents of the sea,
Where the green glossy blades drink the blue wave;
Grass waiting in dark table-lands of snow;
O'er new-riven chasms weaving its light veil,
And quiet fields o'er fallen and jagged peaks:
The invulnerable vesture of the world.

EDITH SITWELL

Edith Sitwell, daughter of Sir George and Lady Ida Sitwell, granddaughter of the Earl of Landesborough, was born at Scarborough, Yorkshire, in 1887. She was educated, as she puts it, "in secrecy" and in 1914 came to London, where she has lived ever since. A portrait of her, painted by Alvaro Guevara, has been bought for the nation and hangs in the Tate Gallery.

In 1916, she began the editing of *Wheels*, a determinedly modern anthology which outraged most of the conservative critics. Her own poems provided an even greater series of shocks. After a mild and undistinguished début—*The Mother and Other Poems* (1915)—Miss Sitwell published, in a succession so speedy as to seem little less than rapid-fire, *Clown's Houses* (1918), *The Wooden Pegasus* (1920), *Façade* (1922), *Bucolic Comedies* (1923).

In these volumes—particularly in the last two—Miss Sitwell limits her gamut; but, within her range, there is no poet quite like her. Her favorite instrument seems to be the xylophone, and it is amazing what effects she produces from its restricted timbre.

Miss Sitwell is a virtuoso in the communication of a half-wooden, half-glassy tone which is seldom without brilliance. It has been objected that Miss Sitwell's poetry is artificial, and this may be true. But the criticism is not as devastating as it seems, for hers is obviously, and purposefully, an artificial world. It is a curious, semi-mechanical heaven and earth over which her keen eye ranges, a landscape in which Miss Sitwell sees vividly, as none before her has seen, skies of paper, seas of wool, the "reynard-colored sun," the world "like a bare egg laid by the feathered air," the "coltish wind nuzzling the hand," trees "hissing like green geese," "barley-sugar children,"—she even hears Silence "like a slow-leaking tap." If Miss Sitwell's is nothing but a clock-work, conjuring-trick sort of poetry—and it is much more than that—there has rarely been so dazzling a set of ingenuities, so brilliant an exhibition of verbal legerdemain.

But, it must be reiterated, Miss Sitwell is much more than an adroit juggler of startling phrases. Purely as nonsense, she has written some of the most delectable nonsense verses of the age; her grotesque nursery rhymes are, in their own genre, as memorable as De la Mare's. The secret of her serious poetry is scarcely more difficult to capture. After one's initial bewilderment (due chiefly to the galloping pace of her verse), the wit of her comments, the fitness of her strange associations, the novel romanticism of an essentially feminine mind—all these lie ready to disclose themselves beneath the surface glitter.

Beginning with *The Sleeping Beauty* (1924) Miss Sitwell has progressively essayed to humanize her hard, bright idiom. Here, as in the succeeding *Troy Park* (1925) and *Rustic Elegies* (1927), she achieves an intensity which her other work, for all its felicities, never expressed. Her poems begin to approach reality, but this recorder is never content with representation. She delights to juxtapose actualities and impossibilities; assuming, in quick succession, an enigmatic mask, a bizarre clarity, shifting suddenly from patent absurdity to piercing sympathy. No longer reflecting life from the outside, she adds the note of compassion. She moves with care and sensitivity, delicately charting the border between reality and insanity. She is Donne one moment, Lewis Carroll the next. To apply the term "mystic" to her will surprise only those who have never cared to see through the glassy surface of her verse. To such readers, Miss Sitwell will remain the artificer of a *papier maché* universe, a juggler amusing herself in a world where grass is shrill, fire furry, where rains hang like wooden stalactites, and where the creaking air, combed seas, and spangled emotions are equally automatic.

In the later volumes her occupation with the human drama is far

more apparent. Here man's hunger for beauty is no longer seen as a pitiful joke in a vegetable existence, but as an insatiate passion. The pictures become actually autobiographical; the touching "Colonel Fantock" reveals the poet in her simplest mood, and those who know her brothers Osbert and Sacheverell will have little difficulty identifying "Dagobert" and "Peregrine."

Gold Coast Customs and Other Poems (1930) repeats the pattern toward which Miss Sitwell's work has been tending: a combination of contempt and nostalgia. The scorn is for a fatuous, loud world she refuses to join and the nostalgia is for the quiet, primitive world left in childhood. Her idiom, more than ever, is a building-up of repetitions and contrasting shocks with a lush music, lingering and illogical. If the luxuriance recalls the modern ballet, it is no accident, since this is the very effect that the poet tries to achieve. It is stylized, and opulent, and always original in movement.

It should be added that Miss Sitwell has written some of the best if slightly mad metaphysics of her day. In her incongruous collating of objects, colors, sensory distortions, she is a grown-up child, innocently absurd, accidentally wise, scattering her observations to a sometimes appreciative though often bewildered audience.

AUBADE

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again.

Comb your cockscomb-ragged hair;
Jane, Jane, come down the stair.

Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light,

Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown.

But the creaking empty light
Will never harden into sight,

Will never penetrate your brain
With overtones like the blunt rain.

The light would show (if it could harden)
Eternities of kitchen-garden,

Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck,
And wooden flowers that 'gin to cluck.

In the kitchen you must light
Flames as staring, red and white

As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining.

Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind. . . .

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again!

THE KING OF CHINA'S DAUGHTER

The King of China's daughter,
She never would love me
Though I hung my cap and bells upon
Her nutmeg tree.
For oranges and lemons,
The stars in bright blue air,
(I stole them long ago, my dear)
Were dangling there.
The Moon did give me silver pence,
The Sun did give me gold,
And both together softly blew
And made my porridge cold;
But the King of China's daughter
Pretended not to see,
When I hung my cap and bells upon
Her nutmeg tree.

SOLO FOR EAR-TRUMPET

The carriage brushes through the bright
Leaves (violent jets from life to light).
Strong polished speed is plunging, heaves
Between the showers of bright hot leaves.

The window-glasses glaze our faces
And jar them to the very basis,—
But they could never put a polish
Upon my manners, or abolish
My most distinct disinclination
For calling on a rich relation!
In her house,—bulwark built between
The life man lives and visions seen,—
The sunlight hiccups white as chalk,
Grown drunk with emptiness of talk,
And silence hisses like a snake,
Invertebrate and rattling ache.

. . . . .

Till suddenly, Eternity
Drowns all the houses like a sea,
And down the street the Trump of Doom
Blares,—barely shakes this drawing-room
Where raw-edged shadows sting forlorn
As dank dark nettles. Down the horn
Of her ear-trumpet I convey
The news that: "It is Judgment Day!"
"Speak louder; I don't catch, my dear."
I roared: "*It is the Trump we hear!*"
"The *What?*"—"The T R U M P !" . . .
"I shall complain—
Those boy-scouts practicing again!"

GARDENER JANUS CATCHES A NAIAD

Baskets of ripe fruit in air
The bird songs seem suspended where

Between the hairy leaves trills dew
All tasting of fresh green anew.

Ma'am, I've heard your laughter flare
Through your waspish-gilded hair:

Feathered masks,
Pots of peas,—
Janus asks
Nought of these

Creaking water
Brightly stripèd
Now I've caught her—
Shrieking biped.
Flute sounds jump
And turn together,
Changing clumps
Of glassy feather.
In among the
Pots of peas
Naiad changes—
Quick as these.

SPINNING SONG

The miller's daughter
Combs her hair,
Like flocks of dove
As soft as vair. . . .

Oh, how those soft flocks flutter down
Over the empty grassy town.

Like a queen in a crown
Of gold light, she
Sits 'neath the shadows'
Flickering tree—

Till the old dame went the way she came,
Playing bobcherry with a candle-flame.

Now Min the cat
With her white velvet gloves
Watches where sat
The mouse with her loves—

(Old and malicious Mrs. Grundy
Whose washing day is from Monday to Monday.)

"Not a crumb," said Min,
"To a mouse I'll be giving.
For a mouse must spin
To earn her living."

So poor Mrs. Mouse and her three cross Aunts
Nibble snow that rustles like gold wheat plants.

And the miller's daughter
Combs her locks,
Like running water
Those dove-soft flocks;

And her mouth is sweet as a honey flower cold
But her heart is heavy as bags of gold.

The shadow-mice said
"We will line with down
From those doves, our bed
And our slippers and gown,

For everything comes to the shadows at last
If the spinning-wheel Time move slow or fast."

PANOPE

How lovely are the tombs of the dead nymphs
On the heroic shore—the glittering plinths
Of jacynth . . . hyacinthine waves profound
Sigh of the beauty out of sight and sound

And many a golden foot that pressed the sand—
Panope walking like the pomp of waves
With plumaged helmet near the fountain caves
The panoply of suns on distant strand—

Is only now an arena for the worm,
Her golden flesh lies in the dust's frail storm

And beauty water-bright for long is laid
Deep in the empire of eternal shade—

Only the sighing waves know now the plinth
Of those deep tombs that were of hyacinth.

But still the echoes of that helmeted bright hair
Are like the pomp of tropic suns, the blare

That from the inaccessible horizon runs—
The eternal music of heroic suns
When their strong youth comes freshened from deep seas—
And the first music heard among the trees.

COLONEL FANTOCK

Thus spoke the lady underneath the tree:
I was a member of a family
Whose legend was of hunting—(all the rare
And unattainable brightness of the air)—
A race whose fabled skill in falconry
Was used on the small song-birds and a winged
And blinded Destiny. . . . I think that only
Winged ones know the highest eyrie is so lonely.

There in a land austere and elegant
The castle seemed an arabesque in music;
We moved in an hallucination born
Of silence, which like music gave us lotus
To ear, perfuming lips and our long eyelids
As we trailed over the sad summer grass
Or sat beneath a smooth and mournful tree.

And Time passed, suavely, imperceptibly.

But Dagobert and Peregrine and I
Were children then; we walked like shy gazelles
Among the music of thin flower-bells.
And life still held some promise,—never ask
Of what,—but life seemed less a stranger then
Than ever after in this cold existence.
I always was a little outside life,—
And so the things we touch could comfort me,
I loved the shy dreams we could hear and see—
For I was like one dead, like a small ghost,
A little cold air wandering and lost.

All day within the straw-roofed arabesque
Of the towered castle and the sleepy gardens wandered
We; those delicate paladins, the waves
Told us fantastic legends that we pondered.

And the soft leaves were breasted like a dove,
Crooning old mournful tales of untrue love.

When night came sounding like the growth of trees,
My great-grandmother bent to say good night,
And the enchanted moonlight seemed transformed
Into the silvery tinkling of an old
And gentle music-box that played a tune
Of Circean enchantments and far seas,
Her voice was lulling like the splash of these
When she had given me her good night kiss
There, in her lengthened shadow, I saw this
Old military ghost with mayfly whiskers,—
Poor harmless creature, blown by the cold wind,
Boasting of unseen, unreal victories
To a harsh unbelieving world unkind,—
For all the battles that this warrior fought
Were with cold poverty and helpless age—
His spoils were shelters from the winter's rage.
And so forever through his braggart voice,
Through all that martial trumpet's sound, his soul
Wept a little sound, so pitiful,
Knowing that he is outside life for ever
With no one that will warm or comfort him. . . .
He is not even dead, but Death's buffoon
On a bare stage, a shrunken pantaloon.—
His military banner never fell,
Nor his account of victories, the stories
Of old apocryphal misfortunes, glories
Which comforted his heart in later life
When he was the Napoleon of the schoolroom
And all the victories he gained were over
Little boys who would not learn to spell.

All day within the sweet and ancient gardens
He had my childish self for audience—
Whose body flat and strange, whose pale straight hair
Made me appear as though I had been drowned—
(We all have the remote air of a legend)—
And Dagobert my brother whose large strength,
Great body and grave beauty still reflect

The Angevin dead kings from whom we spring;
And sweet as the young tender winds that stir
In thickets where the earliest flower-bells sing
Upon the boughs, was his just character;
And Peregrine the youngest with a naïve
Shy grace like a faun's, whose slant eyes seemed
The warm green light beneath eternal boughs.
His hair was like the fronds of feathers, life
In him was changing ever, springing fresh
As the dark songs of birds . . . the furry warmth
And purring sound of fires was in his voice
Which never failed to warm and comfort me.

And there were haunted summers in Troy Park
When all the stillness budded into leaves;
We listened like Ophelia drowned in blond
And fluid hair, beneath stag-antlered trees;
Then in the ancient park the country-pleasant
Shadows fell as brown as any pheasant,
And Colonel Fantock seemed like one of these.
Sometimes for comfort in the castle kitchen
He drowsed, where with a sweet and velvet lip
The snapdragons within the fire
Of their red summer never tire.
And Colonel Fantock liked our company.
For us he wandered over each old lie,
Changing the flowering hawthorn full of bees
Into the silver helm of Hercules,
For us defended Troy from the top stair
Outside the nursery, when the calm full moon
Was like the sound within the growth of trees.
But then came one cruel day in deepest June
When pink flowers seemed a sweet Mozartian tune,
And Colonel Fantock pondered o'er a book.
A gay voice like a honeysuckle nook,—
So sweet,—said, "It is Colonel Fantock's age
Which makes him babble." . . . Blown by winter's rage
The poor old man then knew his creeping fate,
The darkening shadow that would take his sight
And hearing; and he thought of his saved pence
Which scarce would rent a grave . . . that youthful voice

Was a dark bell which ever clanged "Too late"—
A creeping shadow that would steal from him
Even the little boys who would not spell—
His only prisoners. . . . On that June day
Cold Death had taken his first citadel.

F. W. HARVEY

Frederick William Harvey was born in Gloucestershire in 1888, and was educated at Rossall. He became a solicitor in 1912, enlisted in August, 1914, and was taken prisoner in 1916. It was in the German prison camp at Gütersloh that he wrote "The Bugler," one of the isolated noble poems produced by the war.

Although much of Harvey's verse is haphazard and journalistic, several passages in *Gloucestershire Friends* (1917) and *Farewell* (1921) have verve and *esprit* if not the stuff of poetry. His work has been especially well received in his own county, Gloucestershire.

Comrades in Captivity is a prose volume recording Harvey's life in seven German prisons.

THE BUGLER

God dreamed a man;
Then, having firmly shut
Life like a precious metal in his fist
Withdrew, His labor done. Thus did begin
Our various divinity and sin.
For some to plowshares did the metal twist,
And others—dreaming empires—straightway cut
Crowns for their aching foreheads. Others beat
Long nails and heavy hammers for the feet
Of their forgotten Lord. (Who dares to boast
That he is guiltless?) Others coined it: most
Did with it—simply nothing. (Here again
Who cries his innocence?) Yet doth remain
Metal unmarred, to each man more or less,
Whereof to fashion perfect loveliness.
For me, I do but bear within my hand
(For sake of Him our Lord, now long forsaken)
A simple bugle such as may awaken
With one high morning note a drowsing man:

That wheresoe'er within my motherland
That sound may come, 'twill echo far and wide
Like pipes of battle calling up a clan,
Trumpeting men through beauty to God's side.

IN FLANDERS

I'm homesick for my hills again—
  My hills again!
To see above the Severn plain,
Unscabbarded against the sky,
The blue high blade of Cotswold lie;
The giant clouds go royally
By jagged Malvern with a train
Of shadows. Where the land is low
Like a huge imprisoning O
I hear a heart that's sound and high,
I hear the heart within me cry:
"I'm homesick for my hills again—
  My hills again!
Cotswold or Malvern, sun or rain!
  My hills again!"

NOVEMBER

He has hanged himself—the Sun.
  He dangles
A scarecrow in thin air.

He is dead for love—the Sun;
  He who in forest tangles
Wooed all things fair.

That great lover—the Sun,
  Now spangles
The wood with blood-stains.

He has hanged himself—the Sun.
  How thin he dangles
In these gray rains!

Arthur Waley was born in 1889 and was educated at Rugby School and King's College, Cambridge. He entered the employ of the British Museum in 1913 and began the study of Chinese and Japanese in that year. Five years later he was known as one of the foremost English authorities on Chinese and Japanese literatures.

His first publication, *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* (1918, revised edition 1927) has taken its place as a standard work. *More Translations* (1919) and *The Temple* (1923) affirm his admirers' contention that Waley is no mere competent adapter, but a poet in his own right. Whatever the Chinese original may be, the re-creation is a separate work in which the craftsman reveals himself. In his balanced imagery, his enameled phrases, his use but not abuse of color, Waley's own poetic personality is imposed on the originals as certainly as Khayyám's Rubáiyát was suffused with Fitzgerald. As Humbert Wolfe wrote in his foreword to the pamphlet *Poems from the Chinese* published in The Augustan Books of English Poetry in 1928, "We must address ourselves to these poems as though they had been written by an Englishman of the twentieth century, and judge them on that basis. It is a severe test to apply to translations, but Mr. Waley emerges from it serenely victorious. Indeed, serenity is the keynote of all this work—the serenity of assured mastery in a difficult medium, but still more of outlook. The beauty with which these poems are inlaid is fundamentally a wise beauty, and the wisdom is as much in the shape of Mr. Waley's mind as in that of China."

Waley has also translated a quantity of Oriental prose, notably those volumes of fascinating narrative *The Tale of Genji* (1925-1928).

FROM THE "BOOK OF ODES"

Anon. (*c. 1000* B.C.)

There grows an elm-tree on the hill,
And by the mere an alder-tree—
You have a coat, but do not wear it,
You have a gown, but do not trail it,
You have a horse, but do not ride it,
A coach, but do not drive it,
And so it will be when you are dead
And others can enjoy them!
There grows a gum-tree on the hill,

And by the mere a chestnut tree.
You have wine and food, why do you forget
Sometimes to play your lute,
Sometimes to laugh and sing,
Sometimes to steal new playtime from the night?
Shall it be so when you are dead
And others have your house?

HOT CAKE

Shu Hsi (*c.* A.D. *281*)

Winter has come; fierce is the cold;
In the sharp morning air new-risen we meet.
Rheum freezes in the nose;
Frost hangs about the chin.
For hollow bellies, for chattering teeth and shivering knees
What better than hot cake?
Soft as the down of spring,
Whiter than autumn wool!
Dense and swift the steam
Rises, swells and spreads.
Fragrance flies through the air,
Is scattered far and wide,
Steals down along the wind and wets
The covetous mouth of the passer-by.
Servants and grooms
Throw sidelong glances, munch the empty air.
They lick their lips who serve;
While lines of envious lackeys by the wall
Stand dryly swallowing.

THE CRANES

Po Chü-i (A.D. *830*)

The western wind has blown but a few days;
Yet the first leaf already flies from the bough.
On the drying paths I walk in my thin shoes;
In the first cold I have donned my quilted coat.
Through shallow ditches the floods are clearing away;

Through sparse bamboos trickles a slanting light.
In the early dusk, down an alley of green moss,
The garden-boy is leading the cranes home.

W. J. TURNER

Walter James (Redfern) Turner was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1889. He was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, and, at seventeen, made the long journey to Europe. He studied in Germany and, shortly afterward, came to England, where, except for short intervals of travel, he has lived ever since.

His activities have been numerous. He was literary editor of *The Daily Herald*, dramatic critic of *The London Mercury*, and musical critic for three English weeklies. In the last rôle, his essays have been collected in three volumes, the first being *Music and Life* (1921). Later Turner made a reputation as an incisive dramatist, publishing the imaginative *The Man Who Ate the Popomack* (1922) and the satiric *Smaragda's Lover* (1924).

But it is as a poet that Turner first attracted—and still challenges—attention. *The Hunter and other Poems* (1916) contains other matter besides the whimsical "Romance," which has been so much quoted. *The Dark Fire* (1918) suggests if it does not sound depths; repressed passion adds a somber note to the bright fancies. Turner's more recent volumes, *Paris and Helen* (1921), *In Time Like Glass* (1921) and *Landscape of Cytherea* (1923), suffer from an overproductive and uncritical ease, but many of the individual poems are on a level with the author's successful work. A dramatic poem, *The Seven Days of the Sun* (1925) was followed by the simpler and more persuasive *New Poems* (1928). A critical study of Beethoven was published in 1927.

ROMANCE

When I was but thirteen or so
  I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
  Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
  They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatapetl
  In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,—
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school—
Shining Popocatapetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away.

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower—
O shining Popocatapetl
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day;
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi,
They had stolen my soul away!

SONG

Lovely hill-torrents are
At cold winterfall;
Among the earth's silence, they
Stonily call.

Gone Autumn's pageantry;
Through woods all bare
With strange, locked voices
Shining they stare!

THE ROBBER

The Trees were taller than the night,
And through my window square,
Earth-stupefied, great oranges
Drowsed in the leaf-carved air.

Into that tree-top crowded dream
A white arm stretched, and soon
Those green-gold oranges were plucked,
Were sucked pale by the Moon.

And white and still that robber lay
On the frail boughs asleep,
Eating the solid substance through
In silence clear and deep.

Suddenly he went, and then
The wood was dark as death:
Come back, O robber; robber, come;
These gray trees are but breath:

These gray trees are but breath, the Night
Is a wind-walled, dream-filled Hall!
But on the mirror of the air
The wood wreathed dark and tall.

No movement and no sound there was
Within that silent House.
Behind a cloud, the Robber laughed
In a mad white carouse.

TALKING WITH SOLDIERS

The mind of the people is like mud,
From which arise strange and beautiful things,
But mud is none the less mud,
Though it bear orchids and prophesying Kings,
Dreams, trees, and water's bright babblings.

It has found form and color and light,
The cold glimmer of the ice-wrapped Poles;
It has called a far-off glow: Arcturus,
And some pale weeds: lilies of the valley.

It has imagined Virgil, Helen and Cassandra,
The sack of Troy, and the weeping for Hector—
Rearing stark up 'mid all this beauty
In the thick, dull neck of Ajax.

There is a dark Pine in Lapland,
And the great, figured Horn of the Reindeer
Moving soundlessly across the snow,
Is its twin brother, double-dreamed,
In the mind of a far-off people.

It is strange that a little mud
Should echo with sounds, syllables, and letters,
Should rise up and call a mountain Popocatapetl,
And a green-leafed wood Oleander.

These are the ghosts of invisible things;
There is no Lapland, no Helen and no Hector,
And the Reindeer is a darkening of the brain,
And Oleander is but oleander.

Mary Magdalena and the vine Lachryma Christi,
Were like ghosts up the ghost of Vesuvius,
As I sat and drank wine with the soldiers,
As I sat in the Inn on the mountain,
Watching the shadows in my mind.

The mind of the people is like mud:
Where are the imperishable things,
The ghosts that flicker in the brain—
Silent women, orchids, and prophesying Kings,
Dreams, trees, and water's bright babblings!

THE MUSIC OF A TREE

Once, walking home, I passed beneath a Tree,
It filled the dark like stone statuary,
  It was so quiet and still,
  Its thick green leaves a hill
Of strange and faint earth-branching melody:

Over a wall it hung its leaf-starred wood,
And as I lonely there beneath it stood,
  In that sky-hollow street
  Where rang no human feet,
Sweet music flowed and filled me with its flood;

And all my weariness then fell away,
The houses were more lovely than by day;
The Moon and that old Tree
Sang there, and secretly,
With throbbing heart, tip-toe I stole away.

T. P. CAMERON WILSON

"Tony" P. Cameron Wilson was born in South Devon in 1889 and was educated at Exeter and Oxford. He wrote one novel besides several articles under the pseudonym *Tipuca*, a euphonic combination of the first three initials of his name. Wilson's collected poems, *Magpies in Picardy*, published by The Poetry Bookshop, appeared posthumously in 1919.

When the War broke out he was a teacher in a school at Hindhead, Surrey, and, after many months of gruelling conflict, he was given a captaincy. He was killed in action by a machine-gun bullet March 23, 1918, at the age of 29. Though not one of whom a great future could have been predicted, his death was a distinct loss to the happy England he explored.

SPORTSMEN IN PARADE

They left the fury of the fight,
And they were very tired.
The gates of Heaven were open quite,
Unguarded and unwired.
There was no sound of any gun,
The land was still and green;
Wide hills lay silent in the sun,
Blue valleys slept between.

They saw far-off a little wood
Stand up against the sky.
Knee-deep in grass a great tree stood;
Some lazy cows went by . . .
There were some rooks sailed overhead,
And once a church-bell pealed.
"*God! but it's England,*" some one said,
"*And there's a cricket-field!*"

Viola Meynell, daughter of Alice Meynell (see page 193), has written but one volume of poetry, *Verses* (1919), but that small collection contains several highly individualized poems—"Jonah and the Whale" is typical—which compare favorably to those of her mother.

The subtle and metaphysical are not so apparent in her novels, of which there were eight by 1930. Both these qualities, however, intensify the short stories in *Young Mrs. Cruse* (1924).

JONAH AND THE WHALE

He sported round the watery world.
His rich oil was a gloomy waveless lake
Within the waves. Affrighted seamen hurled
Their weapons in his foaming wake.

One old corroding iron he bore
Which journeyed through his flesh but yet had not
Found out his life. Another lance he wore
Outside him pricking in a tender spot.

So distant were his parts that they
Sent but a dull faint message to his brain.
He knew not his own flesh, as great kings may
Not know the farther places where they reign.

His play made storm in a calm sea;
His very kindness slew what he might touch;
And wrecks lay scattered on his anger's lee.
The Moon rocked to and fro his watery couch.

His hunger cleared the sea. And where
He passed, the ocean's edge lifted its brim.
He skimmed the dim sea-floor to find if there
Some garden had its harvest ripe for him.

But in his sluggish brain no thought
Ever arose. His law was instinct blind.
No thought or gleam or vision ever brought
Light to the dark of his old dreamless mind.

Until one day sudden and strange
Half-hints of knowledge burst upon his sight.
Glimpses he had of Time, and Space, and Change,
And something greater than his might;

And terror's leap to imagine sin;
And blinding Truth half-bare unto his seeing.
It was the living man who had come in . . .
Jonah's thoughts flying through his being.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON

Dorothy M. Richardson (Mrs. Alan Odle), known chiefly as a novelist of extraordinary sensitivity, has allowed little of her verse to appear in print. Her chief work is a continued novel (*Pilgrimage*) divided into a series of books the first of which, *Pointed Roofs*, was published in 1915 and the ninth, *Oberland*, appeared in 1927. There is little plot, the idiom is not unusual; but life seen through the eyes of her chief character, Miriam Henderson, becomes vivid in its smallest commonplaces. In her use of introspection, time-shifting, and intensification of detail, she has undoubtedly influenced the more sensational work of James Joyce.

Up to the present no volume containing Dorothy Richardson's verse has been published.

FREEDOM

There is no truth but mine to make me free.
And free I am, since my truth shows me bound.
Being is freedom, moving step by step
To sudden flight and falling.
Falling and flight again. Whatever moves
Is free, and all things move, led by their mystery.
The smallest step sets free to be aware
Of their soft breath when roses fill the air.

CAMILLA DOYLE

Camilla Doyle was born at Cathedral Close, Norwich, where she has lived ever since. Besides being a writer, Miss Doyle is well

known as an artist and craftsman, having exhibited her paintings and furniture at various galleries.

Her *Poems* (1923) reveal the same sensitivity to line and motion as her drawings; even so tiny a sketch as "The Rabbit" has the faithful economy of a Japanese print, while "March" is a whimsical painting in the modern manner faintly suggestive of Edward Thomas.

THE RABBIT

All day this spring—the first he's known—
He lets himself be sideways blown
When the wind comes; he'll leap and pounce,
And try to rush two ways at once,
On feet that catch the very sound
Cascades make spattering to the ground.
  Though men with difficulty sing how soon
    They die, how seldom living they can thrive,
  He makes a little dancing-tune
    By only being alive;
No leaf that April winds blow off the tree
Falls and leaps round again so gay as he.

MARCH

Green triangles have come on the ground,
  Green fretted things that we shall see
Grown to wild parsley soon. The hens
  Are talking news excitedly.

Big dimples stay in the sparrows' fluff,
  They preen with such fine energy.
The very dust's alert. His songs
  The blackbird stirs from memory—

The prettiest one he knew last year
  Is still a soft uncertainty.
The catkins drip like honey spilt,
  The cock crows twice as frequently.

And the wind rises, tossing back
  The spring: "You'll like it more," says he,
"For twisting aside, like the blackbird's song,
  And vexing you with 'Presently.'"

THE MOON

How like a beckoning finger shows
The fair young moon that lately rose—
As though she called her thirty days
With bright deluding promises.

The answering waves at night, that took
Her silver livery, leap to crook
Themselves into her form as well,
And sink in tears because they fail.

Who'ld think her beckoning finger were
A skeleton's, all white and bare?
For all her loveliness the moon
Is but a long-dead skeleton.

And if you doubt, all you that are
Fonder than waves of this bright star—
Wait but a little, at the full
We'll see her as a fleshless skull.

MURIEL STUART

Muriel Stuart first attracted notice with "Christ at Carnival," a long poem which appeared in *The English Review* in 1915. This, later, became the title-poem of her first volume, published during the following year. More lyrical, however, are *The Cockpit of Idols and Other Poems* (1918) and *Poems* (1922), in both of which the verse suggests an imaginative strength beneath smooth contours.

THE SEED SHOP

Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbled stone or shifting sand,
Forlorn as ashes, shriveled, scentless, dry—
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.

Dead that shall quicken at the call of Spring,
Sleepers to stir beneath June's magic kiss,
Though birds pass over, unremembering,
And no bee seek here roses that were his.

In this brown husk, a dale of hawthorn dreams;
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust
That will drink deeply of a century's streams.
These lilies shall make summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,
Sealed in their shells, a million roses leap;
Here I can blow a garden with my breath,
And in my hand a forest lies asleep.

COMMON FIRES

The fern and flame had fought and died together,
From fading frond the falling smoke crept gray,
The heath drew close her old brown shawl of heather,
And turned her face away.

Today the bee no bell of honey misses,
The birds are nesting where the bracken lies
Green, tranquil, deep, quiet as dreams or kisses
On weary lips and eyes.

The heath has drawn the blackened threads together;
My heart has closed her lips upon old pain;
But somewhere in my heart and in the heather,
No bud shall grow again.

FREDEGOND SHOVE

Fredegond Shove was nothing more than an unfamiliar but provocative name until the appearance of her group of four poems in the 1918-1919 issue of *Georgian Poetry*. Her own volume, *Dreams and Journeys* (1919), displays a richer command of imagery which, without straining for any novelty of utterance, is far removed from the traditional poetic jargon. Writing chiefly about simple things, she is able to invest her casual subjects with freshness. An anonymous critic in The Chapbook remarked, "Her poetry is like sunlight on a green hill. It is always the same sun and the same hill, but the imagination of the beholder sees it each time in a new and beautiful light."

Though she has only a few dozen poems, they are unlike the neat versifying indulged in by most of the so-facile women

of her day. Mrs. Shove is particularly successful in the world of half-lights; she makes the subliminal more real than realism.

A MAN DREAMS HE IS THE CREATOR

I sat in heaven like the sun
  Above a storm when winter was:
I took the snowflakes one by one
  And turned their fragile shapes to glass:
I washed the rivers blue with rain
And made the meadows green again.

I took the birds and touched their springs,
  Until they sang unearthly joys:
They flew about on golden wings
  And glittered like an angel's toys:
I filled the fields with flowers' eyes,
As white as stars in Paradise.

And then I looked on man and knew
  Him still intent on death, still proud.
Whereat into a rage I flew
  And turned my body to a cloud:
In the dark shower of my soul
The star of earth was swallowed whole.

THE WILLOW TREE

There is a willow tree
  Grows in the fountain's bed;
He has a sooty trunk,
  He has a grizzled head.

The wizened snowflakes find
  A shelter in his twigs
And at his knotted skull
  The last woodpecker digs.

SOPS OF LIGHT

Stop still on the stair,
  (Draw in your breath):
Love is the whole air,
  There is no death:

Set the jug aside
  For beams to fill:
Peace is the housetide;
  Then be still.

Let the window stand
  Open to tree;
Light is the whole land
  And the whole sea:
The clocks in the house chime.
  O, the day's steep,
But the soul knows no time
  Nor any sleep.

ROSE MACAULAY

Rose Macaulay, the daughter of G. C. Macaulay, late lecturer in English literature at Cambridge, is known chiefly through her novels and, through these, as a wit. Although she had written some six volumes before 1921, it was in that year, with the publication of *Dangerous Ages,* that she became known on both sides of the Atlantic. Her reputation as a satirist was enhanced by several subsequent novels, particularly by *Told by an Idiot* (1923) and *Keeping Up Appearances,* the American edition of which was entitled *Daisy and Daphne* (1928).

It is an entirely different author who is presented in *The Two Blind Countries* (1914) and *Three Days* (1919). This is not only a writer of verse, but a serious, almost a mystical if not always successful poet. In both volumes Miss Macaulay explores the limbo between consciousness and intuition. In this world between common knowledge and unlimited possibility she is courageously, and sometimes calmly, at home.

MURDER

I

"Which road to the fen inn?" "You follow me,
And you'll find out before the moon gets up."
"How far to go? How long before we sup?"
"Why that, young man, will be as it will be."
"The dim downs heave and tumble like the sea;

The great wind raves like waves on a hidden shore;
The climbing moon flames red at the night's door—
She'll soon break in. . . . How near to bed are we?"
"A short way, a short way, impatient sir;
You shall sleep sound anon, and the moon's light
Shall wake you not, nor shall the shiver and stir
Of winds break in upon your quiet night. . . .
This is the inn; I am the inn-keeper;
I choked you a mile back, for greed and spite."

II

"Are you quite near? There was a sound of going,
And sudden alarm struck coldly through my dream."
"You heard the whispering run of the dark stream,
And the night wind through the gray willows blowing."
"Does the wind creep like furtive feet tiptoeing?"
"Yea, very like." "I dreamt of a dim rout
Of stealthy shades that quietly stole about. . . ."
"That was the murderous river flowing, flowing."
"Put out your hand. It's touch is cold on mine."
"Through the wide casement steals the chilling air."
"Your whispering voice sounds distant and malign:
Like grass on a dewy night is your strange hair. . . .
Speak, speak. . . ." "Peace, fool; he will not speak again.
I speak for him who has been an hour slain."

THEODORE MAYNARD

Theodore Maynard was born November 3, 1890 at Madras, India, where his parents were missionaries. His early education was in England but he took his degree at Fordham University while teaching at its Graduate School. He came to America for the first time in 1909, intending to study for the Congregational ministry, but while supplying at a country church in Vermont preached a sermon which led to a call for his resignation. It was on fools; and the rustic congregation, suspecting personal implications, regarded it as heretical. Fortunately rebuffed in his ambition, Maynard returned to England in 1911, working his passage on a cattle-boat, and not long afterwards, (having become a Catholic) tested unsuccessfully his vocation to the

Dominican order. Seven months later he returned to the world, married, and took up journalism, writing for *The New Witness* under the editorship of the Chestertons and for other London periodicals. He came to the United States for the second time in 1920 to lecture, but remained to teach in California. In 1925 he moved to New York, and three years later was appointed head of the English Department at Georgetown University.

Maynard's first book, *Laughs and Whiffs of Song* (1915), was incorporated with two other small volumes and published in America as *Poems* in 1919. This collection, like *The Last Knight,* which followed it in 1920, was immature and imitative. Maynard, it is evident, had absorbed his influences but not gestated them. *Exile* (1928) is far better. The influence of Chesterton and less modern Catholic poets is not so apparent; Maynard's stanzas proceed from concepts and convictions which are his own.

In addition to his verse, Maynard has published a novel, two anthologies, and two collections of essays, one of which (*Our Best Poets,* 1922) is a partisan but provocative set of estimates.

EXILE

Here where the season swiftly turns
Its great wheel forward while there burns
  Red in the redwood trees:
And while the eucalyptus climbs
Above the palm trees and the limes
  By Californian seas,

I think of England—and there wakes
Pain like wild roses in her brakes,
  A pain as dear as they,
That digs its roots in English earth,
And brings an English flower to birth
  Six thousand miles away.

The Downs are standing hugely drawn
Magnificent against the dawn,
  Deep black against the sky.
The first cock crows; the light leaps higher;
The Channel is a flood of fire
  And crimson suddenly.

And London, moving in her bed,
Hears on the eaves above her head
The earlier sparrows stir.
A thin mist rises and the dew
Is thick on Hampstead and at Kew—
The dawn has greeted her.

I ache in memory, yet I know
That if I ever homeward go
I shall not ever find
In England's gentle tenderness
The rest I seek for which can bless
My tired, unquiet mind.

For though I wander through all lands,
Seeking a house not built with hands
For my eternal home,
No city in this world of men
Can claim me as a citizen
From Babylon to Rome.

Not even London, where I burned
With bliss because in her I learned
My faith, my love, my art;
Not even London, where I trod
Through crowded streets alone with God,
And anguish in my heart;

Not even London, though she stands
To me with priestly praying hands
In every dome and spire,
Can be the city of my quest,
Of infinite and final rest,
The end of all desire.

But London, London has become
A heavenly symbol and the sum
Of all the world can give.
And English air that was my breath
Remains my mortal life, till death
Shall set me free to live.

The apple tree's an apple still
Here or upon an English hill;
  The moon among the boughs
Is the same moon, although it went
O'er ghostly orchards far in Kent
  When noon shone on my house.

But ah! some change had come to it
Beyond my exegetic wit:
  I know not what it was;
Not as the sailor on the spars
Among the Australasian stars
  Beholds the Southern Cross—

This map of heaven I know by rote.
But something struggles at my throat:
  And stirs my secret blood,
While a vague light, unearthly, strange
Glows through the lineaments of change
  On field and hill and wood.

The Roman poplars in their lines
Like Roman soldiers, Roman vines—
  These I had known of old.
And here in evidence the plain
And iron intellect of Spain,
  Her fury hot and cold.

But these are exiles, too, whose need
Has clung and stiffened round the Creed
  Which made them clear and strong.
Though far from Europe, here they keep
Her name remembered in their sleep,
  And in their classic song.

The apple tree remembers how
The blossoms burgeoned on her bough
  By little English streams;
And how the cider-drinking men
Were mighty with the sword and pen,
  And mightiest in their dreams.

The poplar and the olive know
How like an arrow from a bow
  The Roman road was shot;
How Roman law and Roman Pope
Brought order and outrageous hope
  To men who had them not.

. . . . .

The giant masonry shall pass,
The palaces be mounds of grass—
  And yet not all in vain
That energy of brain and bone,
Though no stone on another stone
  Shall ever stand again.

I well may join the cry with them,
"If I forget Jerusalem . . ."
  I who shall not forget
My holy city, made more fair
By distance and the alien air
  Wherein my life is set.

If London come to empty loss,
And jackals wail at Charing Cross;
  And if at Westminster
The lizards crawl about each niche,
And she be poor who once was rich—
  I shall remember her.

For now I know with what in mind
The Abbey windows were designed,
  Her pavements were laid down;
And how her streets were meant to go
Beyond the steeple bells of Bow
  To the celestial Town.

And so beside the Golden Gate
A gate of purer gold I wait,
  A more resplendent wall
Than London's—daring now to lift
My voice to praise God's bitter gift,
  Exile, the best of all.

THE WORLD'S MISER

I

A miser with an eager face
Sees that each roseleaf is in place.

He keeps beneath strong bolts and bars
The piercing beauty of the stars.

The colors of the dying day
He hoards as treasure—well He may!—

And saves with care (lest they be lost)
The dainty diagrams of frost.

He counts the hairs of every head,
And grieves to see a sparrow dead.

II

Among the yellow primroses
He holds His summer palaces,

And sets the grass about them all
To guard them as His spearmen small.

He fixes on each wayside stone
A mark to show it as His Own,

And knows when raindrops fall through air
Whether each single one be there,

That gathered into ponds and brooks
They may become His picture-books,

To shew in every spot and place
The living glory of His face.

ISAAC ROSENBERG

Isaac Rosenberg was born at Bristol on November 25, 1890. At the age of seven his parents brought him to London; at four-

teen he was compelled to leave school and work for his living. Later some friends interested themselves in the boy who had begun to show great talent as a writer and draftsman, and made it possible for the young Jew from the East End to attend the Slade School. After three years of art schooling, during which Rosenberg won prizes as well as praise, ill health forced him to leave England. In 1914, he went to South Africa, having a married sister in Capetown. It was there that he definitely decided to become a poet. He attempted to support himself by writing and lecturing, but his efforts were without success and, in less than a year, he was back in London. War had broken out. Sick and unhappy, Rosenberg enlisted in 1915. Early in 1916, he was sent to France, totally unfitted for military life. Nevertheless, his endurance was amazing; he hated war with all the force of his keen mind and disabled body, but he never whined. He was killed in action on April 1, 1918.

As a poet, Rosenberg is greater in promise than achievement. Most of the privately printed *Night and Day* (1912), although published at the age of twenty-two, was written in his 'teens. Even the succeeding *Youth* (1915) suffers from verbal awkwardness; a fear of falling into weak writing led him to complicate his images until they are, for the most part, turgid and overburdened. But in *Moses* (1916), and in the posthumous war-poems, the passionate young poet speaks in his own half-savage voice. Here and there, a passage suggests Abercrombie, whom Rosenberg admired greatly; but the images are so fiercely fresh, the accent so personal, that there is no mistaking the strength and originality of Rosenberg's gift.

Rosenberg's three small books, as well as a quantity of uncollected verse including an unfinished play, were published in one volume, *Poems*, in 1922. Not the least remarkable feature of this unusual collection is the fact that the contents were selected and edited by Gordon Bottomley and the introductory memoir was supplied by Laurence Binyon.

THE ONE LOST

I mingle with your bones;
You steal in subtle noose
This lighted dust Jehovah loans
And now I lose.

What will the Lender say
When I shall not be found,
Safe-sheltered at the Judgment Day,
Being in you bound?

He'll hunt through wards of Heaven,
Call to uncoffined earth,
"Where is this soul, unjudged, not given
Dole for good's dearth?"

And I, lying so safe
Within you, hearing all,
To have cheated God shall laugh,
Freed by your thrall.

THE JEW

Moses, from whose loins I sprung,
Lit by a lamp in his blood
Ten immutable rules, a moon
For mutable lampless men.

The blond, the bronze, the ruddy,
With the same heaving blood,
Keep tide to the moon of Moses.
Then why do they sneer at me?

THE DEAD HEROES

Flame out, you glorious skies,
Welcome our brave;
Kiss their exultant eyes;
Give what they gave.

Flash, mailèd seraphim,
Your burning spears;
New days to outflame their dim
Heroic years.

Thrills their baptismal tread
The bright proud air;
The embattled plumes outspread
Burn upwards there.

Flame out, flame out, O Song!
Star, ring to star!
Strong as our hurt is strong,
Our children are.

Their blood is England's heart;
By their dead hands,
It is their noble part
That England stands.

England—Time gave them thee;
They gave back this
To win Eternity
And claim God's kiss.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

Francis Ledwidge was born in Slane, County Meath, Ireland, in 1891. His brief life was fitful and uncertain. He was, at various times, a miner, a grocer's clerk, a farmer, a scavenger, an experimenter in hypnotism, and, at the end, a soldier. He served as a lance-corporal on the Flanders front and was killed in July, 1917, at the age of 26 years.

Ledwidge's poetry is rich in nature-drawing; his lines palpitate with a thin but romantic charm. Obviously influenced by the sensuous imagery of Keats, his twilight-colored verse is unaffectedly melodious. He was—as is obvious by his choice of titles—fondest of dim hours and evening clouds in some "blue corner off the moon's highway."

Discovered and sponsored by Lord Dunsany, Ledwidge published two volumes during his lifetime: *Songs of the Fields* (1914) and *Songs of Peace* (1916). Both books (as well as the posthumous *Last Songs*) were incorporated in *Complete Poems* (1919).

AN EVENING IN ENGLAND

From its blue vase the rose of evening drops;
Upon the streams its petals float away.
The hills all blue with distance hide their tops
In the dim silence falling on the gray.
A little wind said "Hush!" and shook a spray
Heavy with May's white crop of opening bloom;
A silent bat went dipping in the gloom.

Night tells her rosary of stars full soon,
They drop from out her dark hand to her knees.
Upon a silhouette of woods, the moon
Leans on one horn as if beseeching ease

From all her changes which have stirred the seas.
Across the ears of Toil, Rest throws her veil.
I and a marsh bird only make a wail.

EVENING CLOUDS

A little flock of clouds go down to rest
In some blue corner off the moon's highway,
With shepherd-winds that shook them in the West
To borrowed shapes of earth, in bright array,
Perhaps to weave a rainbow's gay festoons
Around the lonesome isle which Brooke has made
A little England full of lovely noons,
Or dot it with his country's mountain shade.

Ah, little wanderers, when you reach that isle [1]
Tell him, with dripping dew, they have not failed,
What he loved most; for late I roamed a while
Thro' English fields and down her rivers sailed;
And they remember him with beauty caught
From old desires of Oriental Spring
Heard in his heart with singing overwrought;
And still on Purley Common gooseboys sing.

THE WIFE OF LLEW

And Gwydion said to Math, when it was Spring:
"Come now and let us make a wife for Llew."
And so they broke broad boughs yet moist with dew,
And in a shadow made a magic ring:
They took the violet and the meadow-sweet
To form her pretty face, and for her feet
They built a mound of daisies on a wing,
And for her voice they made a linnet sing
In the wide poppy blowing for her mouth.
And over all they chanted twenty hours.
And Llew came singing from the azure south
And bore away his wife of birds and flowers.

[1] The island of Skyros where Rupert Brooke was buried.

A RAINY DAY IN APRIL

When the clouds shake their hyssops, and the rain
Like holy water falls upon the plain,
'Tis sweet to gaze upon the springing grain
And see your harvest born.

And sweet the little breeze of melody
The blackbird puffs upon the budding tree,
While the wild poppy lights upon the lea
And blazes 'mid the corn.

The skylark soars the freshening shower to hail,
And the meek daisy holds aloft her pail,
And Spring all radiant by the wayside pale
Sets up her rock and reel.

See how she weaves her mantle fold on fold,
Hemming the woods and carpeting the wold.
Her warp is of the green, her woof the gold,
The spinning world her wheel.

EVENING IN FEBRUARY

The windy evening drops a gray
Old eyelid down across the sun;
The last crow leaves the plowman's way,
And happy lambs make no more fun.

Wild parsley buds beside my feet,
A doubtful thrush makes hurried tune,
The steeple in the village street
Now seems to pierce the twilight moon.

I hear and see these changing charms,
For all my thoughts are fixed upon
The hurry and the loud alarms
Before the fall of Babylon.

IRENE RUTHERFORD McLEOD

Irene Rutherford McLeod, born August 21, 1891, has written three volumes of direct if not distinguished verse, the surest of

which may be found in *Songs to Save a Soul* (1915) and *Before Dawn* (1918). The latter volume is dedicated to A. de Sélincourt, to whom she was married in 1919.

Towards Love (1923) has less quality. The author allows her emotions to flow too easily into molds infirm from overuse. If the old vessels are to be used they must be filled with new wine. Miss McLeod's first distillation remains her best.

"IS LOVE, THEN, SO SIMPLE"

Is love, then, so simple, my dear?
The opening of a door,
And seeing all things clear?
I did not know before.

I had thought it unrest and desire
Soaring only to fall,
Annihilation and fire:
It is not so at all.

I feel no desperate will,
But I think I understand
Many things, as I sit quite still,
With Eternity in my hand.

LONE DOG

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.

I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat,
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff and kick, and hate.

Not for me the other dogs, running by my side,
Some have run a short while, but none of them would bide.
Oh, mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and hunger of the quest!

Francis Meynell, the son of Alice and Wilfrid Meynell, was born in 1891. He was, he says, "fattened up to be a poet, but early decided better to print other people's good poems well than to have his own bad poems printed at all." After working as printer, journalist and politician, he founded The Nonesuch Press in 1923. Since that time the Press under his direction has brought out more than a hundred books of enduring literary value, flawless in all the details—typography, editing, choice of paper, binding and general composition—which go to make the perfect book.

Although he is better known as a master-printer, he has, Meynell himself to the contrary, published several excellent verses. His literary talents also found expression in the editing of George Herbert's *The Temple* (1927) and Thomas Beedome's *Select Poems* (1928), as well as in the authorship of *The Typography of Newspaper Advertisements* (1929).

MAN AND BEAST

I am less patient than this horse
And it is fleeter far than I.
Its hair is silky, mine is coarse;
Grasses have shaped that larger eye,
While to feed me live things must die.

The birds make little darts in air,
And fishes little darts in water,
Old sheep a silver glory share,
Peacocks are peacocks everywhere . . .
Man lies awake, planning the slaughter.

What woman has this old cat's graces?
What boy can sing as the thrush sings?
For me, I'd rather not run races
With dragon-flies, nor thread the mazes
Of a smooth lawn with ants and things.

Yet horse and sheep tread leaf and stem
And bud and flower beneath their feet;
They sniff at Stars-of-Bethlehem
And buttercups are food to them—
No more than bitter food or sweet.

I, to whom air and waves are sealed,
I yet possess the human part.
O better beasts, you now must yield!
I name the cool stars of the field,
I have the flowers of heaven by heart.

PERMANENCE

There is no power to change
  One act, one word.
We move in time: these range
  Immortal. I have heard

Egypt and her Antony,
  With their love first fulfilled
Cry out, and again cry—
  Nor ever are they stilled.

And Sheba I have seen
  Bare for her love her breast.
The silken Lesbian queen
  Leaves nothing unconfest.

Unspaced, untimed, held fast
  Are all things done or undone.
Eternity knows no haste—
  In Babylon, or London.

Though they have never moved
  These hundred hundred years,
Their rhythm when they loved
  Lives ever, and their tears.

When your love's flight shall falter,
  Shall fall like a wounded bird,
You too cannot alter
  The said or the unsaid word.

O passion of wisdom, this
  (Helen held it for such):
You cannot unkiss that kiss,
  You cannot untouch that touch.

Richard Aldington was born in England in 1892, and educated at Dover College and London University. His first poems were published in England in 1909; *Images Old and New* appeared in 1915. Aldington and "H. D." (the chief American Imagist) are conceded to be two of the foremost Imagist poets; their sensitive and clean-cut lines put to shame their scores of imitators. Both appeared, with four others, under Amy Lowell's *Aegis* in the three issues of *Some Imagist Poets.*

Aldington's *War and Love* (1918) is somewhat more regular in pattern; the poems in this latter volume are less consciously programmatic but more searching. Recently, Aldington, in common with most of the *vers libristes,* has been writing in regular rhythms and fixed forms. *Images of Desire* (1919) was followed by *Exile and Other Poems* (1923) which contains whole sections of surprisingly archaic, pseudo-Elizabethan songs. *A Fool i' the Forest* (1925) is a return to Aldington's earlier manner with the addition of foreign dissonances. Though the influence of Eliot is obvious, this phantasmagoria is in many ways Aldington's most important work. Juxtaposing classic calm with the incongruities of a mechanical civilization, Aldington projects an agony unrelated to either ancient or modern backgrounds. This agony was amplified in Aldington's first novel, *Death of a Hero* (1929), a novel dealing with three generations, beginning in the snug little England of the Victorian Nineties; a work kaleidoscopic in effect and, as might be imagined, rich in music variety. His *Collected Poems* were published in 1928.

Critics differ concerning Aldington's position as a poet; none disputes his eminence as a translator. Among his many translations (of which more than twenty were published prior to 1929) are *The Poems of Anyte of Tegea, The Poems of Meleager,* Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyages to the Moon and the Sun, Letters of Voltaire and Frederick the Great.* He is also the editor and translator of *Latin Poems of the Renaissance, Eighteenth Century French Literature* and *Fifty Romance Lyric Poems.*

IMAGES

I

Like a gondola of green scented fruits
Drifting along the dank canals of Venice,
You, O exquisite one,
Have entered into my desolate city.

II

The blue smoke leaps
Like swirling clouds of birds vanishing.
So my love leaps forth toward you,
Vanishes and is renewed.

III

A rose-yellow moon in a pale sky
When the sunset is faint vermilion
In the mist among the tree-boughs
Art thou to me, my beloved.

IV

A young beech tree on the edge of the forest
Stands still in the evening,
Yet shudders through all its leaves in the light air
And seems to fear the stars—
So are you still and so tremble.

V

The red deer are high on the mountain,
They are beyond the last pine trees.
And my desires have run with them.

VI

The flower which the wind has shaken
Is soon filled again with rain;
So does my heart fill slowly with tears,
O Foam-Driver, Wind-of-the-Vineyards,
Until you return.

THE FAUN SEES SNOW FOR THE FIRST TIME

Zeus,
Brazen thunder-hurler,
Cloud-whirler, son-of-Kronos,

Send vengeance on these Oreads
Who strew
White frozen flecks of mist and cloud
Over the brown trees and the tufted grass
Of the meadows, where the stream
Runs black through shining banks
Of bluish white.

Zeus,
Are the halls of heaven broken up
That you flake down upon me
Feather-strips of marble?

Dis and Styx!
When I stamp my hoof
The frozen-cloud specks jam into the cleft
So that I reel upon two slippery points. . . .

Fool, to stand here cursing
When I might be running!

AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

I turn the page and read:
"I dream of silent verses where the rhyme
Glides noiseless as an oar."

The heavy musty air, the black desks,
The bent heads and rustling noises
In the great dome
Vanish . . .
And
The sun hangs in the cobalt-blue sky,
The boat drifts over the lake shallows,
The fishes skim like umber shadows
through undulating weeds,
The oleanders drop their rosy
petals on the lawns,
And the swallows dive and swirl and whistle
About the cleft battlements of Can Grande's castle. . . .

VICARIOUS ATONEMENT

This is an old and very cruel god. . . .

We will endure;
We will try not to wince
When he crushes and rends us.

If indeed it is for your sakes,
If we perish or moan in torture,
Or stagger under sordid burdens
That you may live—
Then we can endure.

If our wasted blood
Makes bright the page
Of poets yet to be;
If this our tortured life
Save from destruction's nails
Gold words of a Greek long dead;
Then we can endure,
Then hope,
Then watch the sun rise
Without utter bitterness.

But, O thou old and very cruel god,
Take if thou canst this bitter cup from us.

EVENING

The chimneys, rank on rank,
Cut the clear sky;
The moon,
With a rag of gauze about her loins
Poses among them, an awkward Venus—

And here am I looking wantonly at her
Over the kitchen sink.

AFTER TWO YEARS

She is all so slight
And tender and white
  As a May morning.
She walks without hood
At dusk. It is good
  To hear her sing.

It is God's will
That I shall love her still
  As he loves Mary,
And night and day
I will go forth to pray
  That she love me.

She is as gold
Lovely, and far more cold.
  Do thou pray with me,
For if I win grace
To kiss twice her face
  God has done well to me.

EDWARD SHANKS

Edward (Buxton) Shanks was born in London in 1892 and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He has reviewed verse and *belles-lettres* for several years for various English publications, and is an assistant editor of *The London Mercury*. He was the first winner of the Hawthornden Prize for imaginative literature in 1919; his *The Queen of China and Other Poems* appearing in the same year. Since that volume, he has published *People of the Ruins* (1920) and *The Island of Youth* (1921).

Shanks has written several studies and two series of *Essays on Literature* (1923 and 1927). His *Collected Poems* were printed in 1926.

COMPLAINT

When in the mines of dark and silent thought
Sometimes I delve and find strange fancies there,
With heavy labor to the surface brought
That lie and mock me in the brighter air.

Poor ores from starvèd lodes of poverty,
Unfit for working or to be refined,
That in the darkness cheat the miner's eye,
I turn away from that base cave, the mind.
Yet had I but the power to crush the stone
There are strange metals hid in flakes therein,
Each flake a spark sole-hidden and alone,
That only cunning, toilsome chemists win.
All this I know, and yet my chemistry
Fails and the pregnant treasures useless lie.

STELLA BENSON

Stella Benson was born in 1892 at Much Wenlock in Shropshire, her father being "a sort of squire down there," but, as she was a delicate child, she spent most of her girlhood in Switzerland and Southern France. After doing social work during the War, she paid her first visit to America in 1918. Ordered to a warm climate by her physician, she came to California and, having no funds, tried to support herself in San Francisco as lady's maid, bill-collector and book-agent, but without success in any of these capacities. Later, she did tutoring at the University of California, returned to England by way of China, where she taught Chinese boys in an English church school, and during her travels in the Orient met her husband, J. C. O'Gorman Anderson.

Stella Benson is generally known as a novelist of piquant charm. Her volume of verse, *Twenty* (1918), reveals more of herself than her more voluminous prose; it has all the insouciance of *I Pose* (1915), the delicacy of *The Poor Man* (1920) and the finesse of *Pipers and a Dancer* (1924).

WORDS

O words, O words, and shall you rule
The world? What is it but the tongue
That doth proclaim a man a fool,
So that his best songs go unsung,
So that his dreams are sent to school
And all die young.

There pass the traveling dreams, and these
My soul adores—my words condemn—
Oh, I would fall upon my knees
To kiss their golden garments' hem,
Yet words do lie in wait to seize
And murder them.

Tonight the swinging stars shall plumb
The silence of the sky. And herds
Of plumèd winds like huntsmen come
To hunt with dreams the restless birds.
Tonight the moon shall strike you dumb,
O words, O words. . . .

FIVE SMOOTH STONES

It was young David, lord of sheep and cattle,
Pursued his fate, the April fields among,
Singing a song of solitary battle,
A loud mad song, for he was very young.

Vivid the air—and something more than vivid,—
Tall clouds were in the sky—and something more,—
The light horizon of the spring was livid
With a steel smile that showed the teeth of war.

It was young David mocked the Philistine.
It was young David laughed beside the river.
There came his mother—his and yours and mine—
With five smooth stones, and dropped them in his quiver.

You never saw so green-and-gold a fairy.
You never saw such very April eyes.
She sang him sorrow's song to make him wary.
She gave him five smooth stones to make him wise.

The first stone is love, and that shall fail you.
The second stone is hate, and that shall fail you.
The third stone is knowledge, and that shall fail you.
The fourth stone is prayer, and that shall fail you.
The fifth stone shall not fail you.

For what is love, O lovers of my tribe?
And what is love, O women of my day?
Love is a farthing piece, a bloody bribe
Pressed in the palm of God—and thrown away.

And what is hate, O fierce and unforgiving?
And what shall hate achieve, when all is said?
A silly joke that cannot reach the living,
A spitting in the faces of the dead.

And what is knowledge, O young man who tasted
The reddest fruit on that forbidden tree?
Knowledge is but a painful effort wasted,
A bitter drowning in a bitter sea.

And what is prayer, O waiters for the answer?
And what is prayer, O seekers of the cause?
Prayer is the weary soul of Herod's dancer,
Dancing before blind kings without applause.

The fifth stone is a magic stone, my David,
Made up of fear and failure, lies and loss.
Its heart is lead, and on its face is gravèd
A crooked cross, my son, a crooked cross.

It has no dignity to lend it value;
No purity—alas, it bears a stain.
You shall not give it gratitude, nor shall you
Recall it all your days, except with pain.

Oh, bless your blindness, glory in your groping!
Mock at your betters with an upward chin!
And when the moment has gone by for hoping,
Sling your fifth stone, O son of mine, and win.

Grief do I give you, grief and dreadful laughter;
Sackcloth for banner, ashes in your wine.
Go forth, go forth, nor ask me what comes after;
The fifth stone shall not fail you, son of mine.

Go forth, go forth, and slay the Philistine.

V(ictoria) Sackville-West, daughter of Baron Sackville of Knole Park, was born in 1892. Her ancestral home figures prominently in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928). *Orlando,* that time-dissolving tour de force, is in fact an elaborate fantasia—half poem, half parody—on the Sackvilles with Victoria Sackville-West (to whom the book is dedicated) scarcely disguised as the hero-heroine. The "plot" of Virginia Woolf's fiction, with its magical telescoping of periods, places and passions, seems to be suggested by one of the interludes in Miss Sackville-West's *The Land,* a passage ending:

> Perilla, fly! Corinna, stay!
> In deserts of Bohemia,
> A wood near Athens, or the wood
> Where these grown oaks as saplings stood
> Three hundred English years gone by,
> "And yet I love her till I die."

V. Sackville-West has become well known in three capacities: as the wife of the critic and diplomat, Harold Nicolson, as a novelist, as a poet. It was as a poet that she began, with *Poems of West and East* (1917). The volume failed to attract attention and she turned to prose, publishing four novels and two volumes of short stories between 1919 and 1924. Of these *The Heir* (1922) received the greatest commendation.

It was not until 1926 that her reputation as a poet was established. In that year she published *The Land* which was awarded the Hawthornden Prize in 1927. *The Land* is a long tribute to the English countryside, interspersed with lyrics. The movement is slow; there is no narrative; the scheme is no more original than Thomson's *The Seasons.* But while there is no novelty of theme or technique, there is an utterance so sincere, a rapport with her material so intense, that they produce a keen if quiet rapture. Here, without pomp, is something close to profundity.

> The country habit has me by the heart,
> For he's bewitched forever who has seen,
> Not with his eyes but with his vision, Spring
> Flow down the woods and stipple leaves with sun,
> As each man knows the life that fits him best,
> The shape it makes in his soul, the tune, the tone . . .

This is a poetry that speaks for itself more clearly than any résumé. Whether Miss Sackville-West writes about the sowing of crops, orchards, cider-making, sheep-shearing, wood-flowers, or weeds, she knows, "as each man knows the life that fits him best,"

the tone which fits the changing look of spring or winter landscapes. Truly the country habit has her by the heart.

WEED MONTH

(*From "The Land"*)

This is the month of weeds.
Kex, charlock, thistle,
Among the shorn bristle
Of stubble drop seeds.
This is the month of weeds.

Spurry, pimpernel, quitch,
Twine in the stubble,
Making for trouble;
With nettle in ditch,
Spurry, pimpernel, quitch.

Yet the field has a friend,
The nimble clover,
Custodian, lover,
Yare to defend.
The field has a friend.

Humble-bees boldly reach
Red clover's honey,
Paid in sweet money.
Hives-bees in vain beseech:
Honey is out of reach.

Now let the clover spread;
Nature it craveth;
Foemen it braveth,
Strangling them dead.
So let the clover spread.

WINTER SONG

(*From "The Land"*)

Many have sung the summer's songs,
Many have sung the corn,
Many have sung white blossom too
That stars the naked thorn—
That stars the black and naked thorn
Against the chalky blue.

But I, crouched up beside the hearth,
Will sing the red and gray;
Red going-down of sun behind
Clubbed woods of winter's day;
Of winter's short and hodden [1] day
That seals the sober hind:

Seals him sagacious through the year
Since winter comes again:
Since harvest's but another toil
And sorrow through the grain
Mounts up, through swathes of ripest grain
The sorrow of the soil.

No lightness is there at their heart,
No joy in country folk;
Only a patience slow and grave
Beneath their labor's yoke,—
Beneath the earth's compelling yoke
That only serves its slave,

Since countryman forever holds
The winter's memory,
When he, before the planets' fires
Have faded from the sky,
From black, resplendent winter sky
Must go about his byres; [2]

[1] Hodden = rustic-coarse, gray.
[2] Byres = buildings, literally cow-sheds.

And whether to the reaper's whirr
That scythes the falling crops,
He travels round the widening wake
Between the corn and copse,
The stubble wake 'twixt corn and copse
Where gleaners ply the rake,

Or whether in his granary loft
He pours the winnowed sacks,
Or whether in his yard he routs
The vermin from the stacks,
The vermin from the staddled [1] stacks
With staves and stones and shouts,

Still, still through all the molten eves
Whether he reaps or hones,
Or counts the guerdon of his sweat,
Still to his inward bones,
His ancient, sage, sardonic bones,
The winter haunts him yet.

Winter and toil reward him still
While he his course shall go
According to his proven worth,
Until his faith shall know
The ultimate justice and the slow
Compassion of the earth.

OSBERT SITWELL

Osbert Sitwell (son of Sir George Sitwell and brother of Sacheverell and Edith Sitwell) was born in London, December 6, 1892, was educated at Eton, and became an officer in the Grenadier Guards, with whom he served in France for various periods from 1914 to 1917. After contesting the 1918 election at Scarborough in the Liberal interests, he devoted himself entirely to literature.

His first contributions appeared in *Wheels* (an annual anthology of a few of the younger radical writers, edited by his sister) and

[1] Staddled = upheld, supported.

disclosed an ironic and individual touch. That impression was strengthened by *Argonaut and Juggernaut* (1920), where Sitwell's cleverness and satire are intensified if not fused. His most remarkable though least brilliant poems are his irregular and fiery protests against smugness and hypocrisy. But Osbert Sitwell's more conventional poetry has a freshness of movement and definiteness of outline.

Out of the Flame (1923) reënforces this judgment. It is in two parts; a contrast, not a combination. There is the world of ideal beauty which the poet loves and the world of idle luxury which rouses his satirical hate. In spite of a certain wildness of aim, Sitwell rarely misses his mark.

For several years after 1923 this author distinguished himself in prose, registering a deep impression with the short stories in *Triple Fugue* (1924) and the novel *Before the Bombardment* (1926). *The Man Who Lost Himself* (1929) is the largest of his prose works; here he seems to shed all but the last drop of his spleen and has accomplished a fancifully philosophic tale in which poetry is instinct.

His subsequent volume of poetry presented him in a new and simpler vein. Sharing the nostalgia of his sister, Edith, he also returns to his childhood for much of the material in *England Reclaimed: A Book of Eclogues* (1927). Satire is still here, but it is satire softened with sympathy; if he laughs at such rustic figures as Mr. Goodbeare and Moping Fred, he smiles with Mr. and Mrs. Nutch, the Southerns, the gamekeepers, gardeners and the homely gentles of the countryside. The author aims at "recording a broad panorama, essentially English, but which seems now, by force of circumstance, to be slipping away into the past." He has succeeded by creating an atmosphere in which the landscape is alive and in which recollection is newly shaped by the imagination.

THE BLIND PEDDLER

I stand alone through each long day
Upon these pavers; cannot see
The wares spread out upon this tray
—For God has taken sight from me!

Many a time I've cursed the night
When I was born. My peering eyes
Have sought for but one ray of light
To pierce the darkness. When the skies

Rain down their first sweet April showers
On budding branches; when the morn
Is sweet with breath of spring and flowers,
I've cursed the night when I was born.

But now I thank God, and am glad
For what I cannot see this day
—The young men cripples, old, and sad,
With faces burnt and torn away;

Or those who, growing rich and old,
Have battened on the slaughter,
Whose faces, gorged with blood and gold,
Are creased in purple laughter!

FOUNTAINS[1]

Proud fountains, wave your plumes,
Spread out your phoenix-wing,
Let the tired trees rejoice
Beneath your blossoming
(Tired trees, you whisper low).

High up, high up, above
These green and drooping sails,
A fluttering young wind
Hovers and dives, but fails
To steal a foaming feather.

Sail, like a crystal ship,
Above your sea of glass;
Then, with your quickening touch,
Transmute the things that pass
(Come down, cool wind, come down).

All humble things proclaim,
Within your magic net,
Their kinship to the Gods.
More strange and lovely yet
All lovely things become.

[1] Compare the poem on the same subject on page 741.

Dead, sculptured stone assumes
The life, from which it came;
The kingfisher is now
A moving tongue of flame,
A blue, live tongue of flame—

While birds, less proud of wing,
Crouch, in wind-ruffled shade,
Hide shyly, then pour out
Their jealous serenade;
. . . Close now your golden wings!

ELEGY FOR MR. GOODBEARE

Do you remember Mr. Goodbeare, the carpenter,
Godfearing and bearded Mr. Goodbeare,
Who worked all day
At his carpenter's tray,
Do you remember Mr. Goodbeare?
Mr. Goodbeare, that Golconda of gleaming fable,
Lived, thin-ground between orchard and stable,
Pressed thus close against Alfred, his rival—
Mr. Goodbeare, who had never been away.

Do you remember Mr. Goodbeare,
Mr. Goodbeare, who never touched a cup?
Do you remember Mr. Goodbeare,
Who remembered a lot?
Mr. Goodbeare could remember
When things were properly kept up:
Mr. Goodbeare could remember
The christening and the coming-of-age:
Mr. Goodbeare could remember
The entire and roasted ox:
Mr. Goodbeare could remember
When the horses filled the stable,
And the port-wine-colored gentry rode after the tawny fox:
Mr. Goodbeare could remember
The old lady in her eagle rage,
Which knew no bounds:
Mr. Goodbeare could remember

When the escaped and hungering tiger
Flickered lithe and fierce through Foxton Wood,
When old Sir Nigel took his red-tongued, clamoring hounds,
And hunted it then and there,
As a Gentleman Should.

Do you remember Mr. Goodbeare,
Mr. Goodbeare who never forgot?
Do you remember Mr. Goodbeare,
That wrinkled and golden apricot,
Dear, bearded, godfearing Mr. Goodbeare
Who remembered remembering such a lot?

Oh, do you remember, do you remember,
As I remember and deplore,
That day in drear and far-away December
When dear, godfearing, bearded Mr. Goodbeare
Could remember
No more?

F. V. BRANFORD

Frederick Victor Branford was born in 1892 in London and, as a child, moved to Scotland where his family had been for generations. He was educated at Edinburgh and Leyden Universities, served in the Air Force during the War, and went to live in the North of Scotland after 1918, recovering from disablement received in service.

His two volumes, *Titans and Gods* (1922) and *The White Stallion* (1924), vibrate with intensity. Related to no particular group, Branford is a passionately intellectual poet. Or rather, his art is the emotional apprehension of the beauty inherent in intellectual nature. His emotion, partly philosophic, partly metaphysical, leads him to compose long cantatas, odes based on theses which in themselves are difficult to follow. But his shorter poems are no more complicated than those of any poet who, like Francis Thompson, sees the image behind reality.

ANY DAISY[1]

I address
Her Mightiness
In fear.

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 194.

Nor have forgot
That she is not
More near,

Nor more far
Than any star
To me;

Then am I
Afraid, and cry
For Thee.

"Lord! Be kind,
For I am blind
With shame.

"Lord, is this
A flower or is
She flame?"

SECRET TREATIES

We thought to find a cross like Calvary's,
And queened proud England with a diadem
Of thorns. Impetuous armies clamoring
For war, from the far utterance of the seas
We sprang, to win a new Jerusalem.
Now is our shame, for we have seen you fling
Full-sounding honor from your lips like phlegm
And bargain up our soul in felonies.
O England, it were better men should read,
In dusty chronicles, of how a death
Had found thee in the van of these crusades;
To tell their eager sons with bated breath,
And burning eyes, about a golden deed,
A vanished race, and high unmortal Shades.

SHAKESPEARE

When to the market-place of dreams I went
To bid a penny for the firmament,

I sudden came upon a star-high man
Whose mighty composition hid the sun
With wings as wide as worlds; and, when he ran
In space, I thought that wind and he were one.
Abrupt he checks those truceless feet and stands
Deliberate with lightnings in his hands,
Over the Sphinx. Created things attend,
The speculations of the gods descend
Upon Earth's human champion stood at bay.
A moment's pause—slow subtle smile—and he,
Murmuring, "Lord! what fools these mortals be!"
Heedless and headlong, goes his boisterous way.

ROBERT NICHOLS

Robert (Malise Bowyer) Nichols was born on the Isle of Wight in 1893. His first volume, *Invocations* (1915), was published while he was at the front, Nichols having joined the army as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Oxford. After serving one year as second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, he was incapacitated by shell shock, visiting America in 1918-19 as a lecturer. His *Ardors and Endurances* (1917) is a representative early work of this poet, although *The Budded Branch* (1918) and *Aurelia* (1920) show an advance in power.

Since 1920, Nichols has devoted himself to drama and philosophic fiction, *Fantastica: The Smile of the Sphinx* (1921) being followed by *Guilty Souls* (1922).

The poet, theorist and dramatist were fused in *Wings Over Europe* (1928), a play written in collaboration with Maurice Browne. Here the sheer force of Nichols' conviction has vitalized a drama in which there is no specious romantic element, in which no woman appears or is mentioned, in which the entire action transpires around a table in a room on Downing Street. The tension in which a struggle of ideas rises to a creative excitement could have been accomplished only by a poet.

FULFILLMENT

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
  Was there grief once? Grief still is mine.
Other loves I have; men rough, but men who stir
  More joy, more grief than love of thee and thine.

Faces cheerful, full of whimsical mirth,
Lined by the wind, burned by the sun;
Bodies enraptured by the abounding earth,
As whose children, brothers we are and one.

And any moment may descend hot death
To shatter limbs! pulp, tear, and blast
Belovèd soldiers who love rude life and breath
Not less for dying faithful to the last.

O the fading eyes, the grimèd face turned bony,
Open, black, gushing mouth, fallen head,
Failing pressure of a held hand shrunk and stony,
O sudden spasm, release of the dead!

Was there love once? I have forgotten her.
Was there grief once? Grief still is mine.
O loved, living, dying, heroic soldier,
All, all my joy, my grief, my love are thine!

THE PILGRIM

Put by the sun, my joyful soul,
We are for darkness that is whole;

Put by the wine, now for long years
We must be thirsty with salt tears;

Put by the rose, bind thou instead
The fiercest thorns about thy head;

Put by the courteous tire, we need
But the poor pilgrim's blackest weed;

Put by—albeit with tears—thy lute,
Sing but to God or else be mute.

Take leave of friends save such as dare
Thy love with loneliness to share.

It is full tide. Put by regret.
Turn, turn away. Forget. Forget.

Put by the sun, my lightless soul,
We are for darkness that is whole.

TO ——

Asleep within the deadest hour of night
And turning with the earth, I was aware
How suddenly the eastern curve was bright,
As when the sun arises from his lair.
But not the sun arose: it was thy hair
Shaken up heaven in tossing leagues of light.

Since then I know that neither night nor day
May I escape thee, O my heavenly hell!
Awake, in dreams, thou springest to waylay;
And should I dare to die, I know full well
Whose voice would mock me in the mourning bell,
Whose face would greet me in hell's fiery way.

NEARER

Nearer and ever nearer . . .
My body, tired but tense,
Hovers 'twixt vague pleasure
And tremulous confidence.

Arms to have and to use them
And a soul to be made
Worthy, if not worthy;
If afraid, unafraid.

To endure for a little,
To endure and have done:
Men I love about me,
Over me the sun!

And should at last suddenly
Fly the speeding death,
The four great quarters of heaven
Receive this little breath.

Wilfred Owen's biography is pitifully brief. He was born at Oswestry on the 18th of March, 1893, was educated at the Birkenhead Institute, matriculated at London University in 1910, obtained a private tutorship in 1913 near Bordeaux and remained there for two years. In 1915, in spite of delicate health, he joined the Artist's Rifles, served in France from 1916 to June, 1917, when he was invalided home. Fourteen months later, he returned to the Western Front, was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in October, and was killed while trying to get his men across the Sambre Canal—with tragic irony—a week before the armistice, on November 4, 1918.

Owen's name was unknown to the world until his friend Siegfried Sassoon unearthed the contents of his posthumous volume, *Poems* (1920). It was evident at once that here was one of the most important contributions to the literature of the War, expressed by a poet whose courage was only surpassed by his integrity of mind and nobility of soul. The restrained passion as well as the pitiful outcries in Owen's poetry have a spiritual kinship with Sassoon's stark verses. They reflect that second stage of the War, when the glib patter wears thin and the easy patriotics have a sardonic sound in the dug-outs and trenches. "He never," writes Sassoon, "wrote his poems (as so many war poets did) to make the effect of a personal gesture. He pitied others; he did not pity himself."

In a scrap which serves as an unfinished preface, Owen wrote, "This book is not about heroes. English poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about deeds or lands, nor anything about glory, honor or dominion. . . .

except War.
Above all, this book is not concerned with Poetry,
The subject of it is War, and the pity of War.
The Poetry is in the pity."

"Strange Meeting," "Miners," and the poignant "Futility" illustrate, beneath their emotional content, Owen's great fondness for assonance. He was continually experimenting with devices to enrich or take the place of rhyme, testing alliterative consonants as substitutes for the prepared and often monotonous matching of vowels. Almost half of his volume is a record of such unique and surprisingly successful experiments. But it is the nobility, the profound sympathy, compassionate without ever becoming maudlin, that gives Owen's verse a place among the authentic poetry of his day. "Dulce et Decorem Est" is obviously a reaction against the "glory" of war; but it is bigger than its subject, something far beyond a protest, surpassing its program.

It is difficult to choose among Owen's few but compelling poems. "Apologia pro Poemate Meo," "Greater Love," "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and the rhymed suspensions already mentioned, will live beyond the tragic events during which they were created. Time has already found a high place for them.

FUTILITY

Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France.
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds—
Woke, once, the clay of a cold star.
Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides
Full-nerved,—still warm,—too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—Oh, what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

APOLOGIA PRO POEMATE MEO

I, too, saw God through mud—
The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches smiled.
War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,
And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a child.

Merry it was to laugh there—
Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
For power was on us as we slashed bones bare
Not to feel sickness or remorse of murder.

I, too, have dropped off fear—
Behind the barrage, dead as my platoon,
And sailed my spirit surging, light and clear
Past the entanglement where hopes lay strewn;

And witnessed exultation—
Faces that used to curse me, scowl for scowl,
Shine and lift up with passion of oblation,
Seraphic for an hour, though they were foul.

I have made fellowships—
Untold of happy lovers in old song.
For love is not the binding of fair lips
With the soft silk of eyes that look and long,

By Joy, whose ribbon slips,—
But wound with war's hard wire whose stakes are strong;
Bound with the bandage of the arm that drips;
Knit in the welding of the rifle-thong.

I have perceived much beauty
In the hoarse oaths that kept our courage straight;
Heard music in the silentness of duty;
Found peace where shell-storms spouted reddest spate.

Nevertheless, except you share
With them in hell the sorrowful dark of hell,
Whose world is but the trembling of a flare,
And heaven but as the highway for a shell,

You shall not hear their mirth:
You shall not come to think them well content
By any jest of mine. These men are worth
Your tears: You are not worth their merriment.

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-bys.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells drooping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But some one still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes wilting in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs
Bitten as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.[1]

[1] "It is sweet and dignified to die for one's country."

GREATER LOVE

Red lips are not so red
    As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.
Kindness of wooed and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure.
O Love, your eyes lose lure
    When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude
    Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed,
Rolling and rolling there
Where God seems not to care;
Till the fierce love they bear
    Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

Your voice sings not so soft,—
    Though even as wind murmuring through raftered loft,—
Your dear voice is not clear,
Gentle, and evening clear,
As theirs whom none now hear
    Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot,
    Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot;
And though your hand be pale,
Paler are all which trail
Your cross through flame and hail:
    Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.

MINERS

There was a whispering in my hearth,
  A sigh of the coal,
Grown wistful of a former earth
  It might recall.

I listened for a tale of leaves
  And smothered ferns,
Proud forests, and the low sly lives
  Before the fawns.

My fire might show steam-phantoms simmer
From Time's old caldron,
Before the birds made nests in summer,
Or men had children.

But the coals were murmuring of their mine.
And moans down there,
Of boys that slept wry sleep, and men
Writhing for air.

I saw white bones in the cinder-shard,
Bones without number.
For many hearts with coal are charred,
And few remember.

I thought of all that worked dark pits
Of war, and died
Digging the rock where Death reputes
Peace lies indeed:

Comforted years will sit soft-chaired,
In rooms of amber,
The years will stretch their hands, well cheered
By our life's ember;

The centuries will burn rich loads
With which we groaned,
Whose warmth shall lull their dreamy lids,
While songs are crooned;
But they will not dream of us poor lads
Lost in the ground.

STRANGE MEETING

It seemed that out of the battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall.

With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
"Strange, friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."
"None," said the other, "save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something has been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery;
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this death; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . ."

FRANK PREWETT

Frank Prewett was born on a farm near Mount Forest, Ontario, Canada, of a pioneer family, August 24, 1893. He attended University College, Toronto, and joined the University officers' Train-

ing Corps on the outbreak of war, but enlisted in the ranks shortly afterwards. He served, as he puts it, "uneventfully" at the Front. After peace was declared, he entered Oxford as an undergraduate, and subsequently has lived as a farmer near Abingdon, Berkshire.

Prewett's first publication was a little volume, *Poems* (1920), which sounded an agreeable though not unusual note. *The Rural Scene* (1924) is far more personal. In his condensed simplicities, Prewett strikes the truly pastoral note. Bound to the soil by inheritance as well as by a natural affection, the poet never strains to achieve that *naïveté* which one so often finds in the work of many of the Georgians. His is the gift of spontaneous song; his is an instinctive expression of "the rural scene" with rarely a trace of affectation.

"OUT OF THE NIGHT"

Out of the night they drop with troubled cries,
  Splitting the keen-tuned freezing air,
Lone travelers through the wind-cut skies
  Instinct-propelled to regions harsh and bare.

They settle with loud shuffling midst the snow;
  The pitiless cold hushes all things to peace;
And I reluctant silent homeward go,
  But leave my soul to chatter with the geese.

Oh, ye mysterious creatures swift and high
  That beat in angle-flights from land to land,
Whence came into your breasts your troubled cry
  And strange desire that gathers you like sand!

With the first streak of dawn they crane their necks,
  Cry out aloud, and rise upon the air,
Taking with them my soul, nor much it recks
  Towards what homeless wastes their flight may bear.

"WHEN CUCKOO FIRST"

When cuckoo first the vale o'erflows
  With barks and bubble-blasts of sound,
And daisies white, or tinctured rose,
  Make a pleasanter sky the ground,
Then maids are trim and neatly seen
  And youth strides godly under green.

Spring is a season we revive
With the upthrusting hedgy things,
When yellowhammers courtship drive
And old cock-pheasants busk their wings,
Then cows dream udder-deep in grass
And hawk over hovers with eye of glass.

Cheevio-chee trills on the spray,
He finds his life so good;
Oh, now be natural and gay
Like the kind God meant we should,
For all things beautiful, sight and sound,
Love made, and make love to abound.

VOICES OF WOMEN

Met ye my love?
Ye might in France have met him;
He has a wooing smile,
Who sees cannot forget him!
Met ye my love?
—We shared full many a mile.

Saw ye my love?
In lands far-off he has been,
With his yellow-tinted hair;
In Egypt such ye have seen.
Ye knew my love?
—I was his brother there.

Heard ye my love?
My love ye must have heard,
For his voice when he will
Tinkles like cry of a bird;
Heard ye my love?
—We sang on a Grecian hill.

Behold your love,
And how shall I forget him,
His smile, his hair, his song?
Alas, no maid shall get him
For all her love,
Where he sleeps a million strong.

SNOW-BUNTINGS

They come fluttering helpless to the ground
Like wreaths of wind-caught snow,
Uttering a plaintive, chirping sound,
And rise and fall, and know not where they go.

So small they are, with feathers ruffled blown,
Adrift between earth desolated and leaden sky;
Nor have they ever known
Any but frozen earth, and scudding clouds on high.

What hand doth guide these hapless creatures small
To sweet seeds that the withered grasses hold?—
The little children of men go hungry all,
And stiffen and cry with numbing cold.

In a sudden gust the flock are whirled away
Uttering a frightened, chirping cry,
And are lost like a wraith of departing day,
Adrift between earth desolate and leaden sky.

RICHARD CHURCH

Richard Church was born in London in 1893 and began to write at the age of eighteen, having by that time also obtained a permanent post in the Civil Service. He has written for the majority of the weeklies, particularly *The Spectator*, for which he is a regular reviewer.

His volume, *Philip* (1921), reveals the work of an artist extremely sensitive to the implications behind the physical fact; a poet who, like a lesser Robert Frost, combines the power of sight with insight.

Since 1922 Church has developed a more somber note. *Mood Without Measure* (1927) is, as the title indicates, a transcript of emotion in free or cadenced verse instead of meter. *Theme with Variations* (1928), though a smaller volume, has larger implications. Never a popular poet, scarcely an enjoyable one in a general sense, Church frequently succeeds in sounding, in a subterranean music, currents deeper than surface agitations.

THE LANTERN

She swings the lantern. Night around her
Swings out, swings in; the roadside falls.
Under her feet abysmal darkness sinks;
Then from the pit, to meet her feet,
Earth rises, somber stones and steady soil
Loom up, stare at the lantern, then . . .
Sink, sink again as it swings.

On she tramps, towering above the lantern,
All her daylight beauty lifted away,
Underlit, and drenched with the dye,
The smudgy gold of the drowsy beams from the lantern.
Over the light her hip turns smooth and strong,
Rolling the shadows to and fro on its breadth,
To and fro in rhythm as on she swings.—
The gaunt trees over her leap, and mope, and bow.—
And one deep breast, like the old moon lacking light,
Rides above, rimmed with a ghostly line,
Then waxes full as the lantern swings before.
Crowning this wild-lit moving life,
The aureoled hair glows gold, a smoke-veiled fire,
Flaming and changing, but ever her crown as she swings
On, swings on, steady and sure, while the earth and skies
Tumble and leap and prance and dance round the lantern.

The cows are milked; she is going home to her babe.

FROM AN UPLAND VALLEY

In a high valley of the hills
Where the wind-spun Earth
In a gust of mirth,
I saw the conflict of our wills:
You the wild
Unreconciled
Self-diviner, trustless; true
Only to the cruel self in you;
Cruel yet kind,
Harsh, tortured mind,

Worse than wanton, sweeter than faith;
I saw you, heard you, fought you—wraith!

There is no absence since you came
Into this vale we call
Life, where the winds fall
Like eagles on quarry, a piercing blame,
Then lulling to dear
Confidences, near
Whisperings, close, so intimate
There's hardly room for love or hate
To slip between.
For what has been,
Was past, is present, will future be,
One piercing agony, one joy for me.

And you, so swift, so sure, burnt clean
And sparse with your soul-inflicted pain,
What have you left to feel?
Could you see the trees kneel
As they kneel here beneath the storm,
Bowed with invisible alarm
Down to stones, grasses,
Sheep-runs, hare-passes,
Shuddering under the siffling wrath
That hisses through each gap and path;
Could you be near me
Would your mind sear me,
With such a wild exemplar by,
As this embrace of earth and sky?

I torture you, I who am still
Yours, shall be till death takes his fill
Of the brimmed lake
Whereat we slake
Our thirst, self poured on self, and run
Into such stillness under the sun
That light is pain,
And loss is gain
Refracted from that source of pleasure.
Oh, brood on this, dear heart, at leisure;

Absent, here,
Gone, but near,
Your passion is flame you cannot measure.

PORTENT

There is no sound:
Only the quiet brittle of the fire
And flake-fall of ash:
Only the pursed drip,
Long drop, drip of water:
Only the sigh,
The high sigh of winter trees
As the east sifts through their branches:
Only the tramp, tramp,
And running to and fro of thoughts
Far away down the avenues of my mind:
Only that ominous gathering,
Distant murmur and cry,
Faint clash of steel:
Only that hoarse preparation
In the sleeping city of my brain.

THE PURIFICATION

They have gone over, the god, the friend, the lover,
They have gone over.
It is growing grey now;
There comes the end of day now.

They were signs then, the stars were a glory for men,
They were signs then.
Those lights flare unseen now,
Things paltry and mean now.

They were true pleasure, the friendly trust, the praise without measure.
They were true pleasure.
Praise is an empty sound now.
Trust treads no firm ground now.

They were music, joy, and truth, the kisses she gave him in
youth.
They were music, joy, and truth.
They are less beautiful now;
They are but dutiful now.

Aye, they have come to an end, the god, the lover, the friend;
They have come to an end.
The soul is alone now:
Strong, naked, full-grown now.

FRANK KENDON

Frank Kendon was born in 1893 at Goudhurst, Kent, educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and was in Egypt and Palestine during the War. Besides being a poet, he has been a schoolmaster and journalist, "a countryman by birth and youth, Londoner by necessity, poet by chance, business man by fate."

Kendon's first appearance was in his section in *Poems by Four Authors* (1920). A full view of his characteristics is obtained in the succeeding *Poems and Sonnets* (1922) in which, without straining for idiomatic effect, Kendon achieves a personal distinction. He is particularly happy in his combinations of rhyme and assonance, or (as in "I spend my days vainly") in the variation of rhyming vowels and shifting consonantal sounds, sometimes referred to as "analyzed rhyme." The first two lyrics here reprinted are unusually adroit pieces of technique—and both are much more than mere technical exercises.

A comparison of "The Kernel" and "I Spend My Days Vainly," with Wilfred Owen's "Futility" and "Strange Meeting" will reward those interested in the manipulation of rhyme-departures.

"I SPEND MY DAYS VAINLY"

I spend my days vainly,
Not in delight;
Though the world is elate
And tastes her joys finely.

Here wrapped in slow musing
Lies my dark mind,
To no music attuned
Save its own, and despising

The lark for remoteness,
The thrush for bold lying,
The soft wind for blowing,
And the round sun for brightness.

O tarry for me, sweet;
I shall stir, I shall wake!
And the melody you seek
Shall be lovely, though late.

THE KERNEL

Now that the flush of summer is gone,
And in the lane no flower is seen,
No hedge in leaf,
No tree in gold or green;

Now that the golden fruit is stored,
And in the wood no song is heard,
No merry stir
Of song from any bird;

Now that the uncompanioned wind
Blows cold across the naked land
And, hung in black,
Bare trees like mourners stand;

Winter reveals through falling rain,
A strength which summer had left unseen:
Beauty and peace
Which, but for tears, had been in vain,
Which, but for loss, had never been.

THE IMMIGRANT

When Ruth was old
She'd take her children's children on her knee,
They never wearied to be told
Tales of her girlhood in a far country.

For though her eyes grew dim
Men said of her: "Her heart is always young,"
And Boaz, while she spoke of him,
Loved the faint accent of a foreign tongue.

HERBERT READ

Herbert Read was born, December 4, 1893, at Muscoates Grange, Kirbymoorside, Yorkshire. He was educated at Crossley's School, Halifax, and at the University of Leeds. Commissioned in January 1915 to the Yorkshire Regiment, he fought in France and Belgium from 1915 to 1918, having been made a captain in 1917. He left the army in 1919, married, and became Assistant at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Read's early work was experimental and unsatisfactory; his first volume, *Songs of Chaos* (1915), scarcely justified the title. *Naked Warriors* (1919), a much more vitalized work, pronounced, as against patriotic sentimentalities, what Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen had been saying. But Read's was no mere echo; his utterance, gnarled and contorted, formed vivid if unlovely lines. *Mutations of the Phoenix* (1923) is overweighted by a concern with style and by the influence of T. S. Eliot, although Read has his own distinct philosophy intense and individualistic.

Collected Poems 1913-1925 (1926) presents, in less than one hundred pages, a progress and, in the midst of disintegration, a centralized faith. Read, established as a critic by his *Reason and Romanticism* (1926) and *English Prose Style* (1928), is still a poet in transition. But under the cloudy angers and distortions he suggests that

. . . some state of high serenity
Exists beyond the range
Of febrile senses.

Besides editing T. E. Hulme's *Speculations* (see page 586) and being the author of a book of war sketches, *In Retreat* (1925), Read has written a book on ceramics and is one of the foremost living authorities on pottery.

DEVICE

O that I might believe that time
Is but a measure thrown on things
That hold existence in a sphere
Intense alone, and always felt

In full reality! For then
I could evade despondency
By magnifying to my frame
The ecstatic beat that night and day
Pulses within the milk-white walls
Of mental sloth, eager to break
Into the radiant release
Of vision divine and precise.

—Time that is shrouded thought
Involving earth and life in doubt.

From THE ANALYSIS OF LOVE

Nature has perpetual tears
In drooping boughs,
And everywhere inanimate death
Is immemorial.

But I have naught that will express
The grief I feel
When men and moods combine to show
The end of this—

This mental ecstasy all spent
In disuniting death;
And the years that spread
Oblivion on our zest.

THE REFUGEES

Mute figures with bowed heads
They travel along the road:
Old women, incredibly old,
And a hand-cart of chattels.

They do not weep:
Eyes are too raw for tears.

Past them have hastened
Processions of retreating gun-teams,
Baggage-wagons and swift horsemen.
Now they struggle along
With the rearguard of a broken army.

We will hold the enemy towards nightfall
And they will move
Mutely into the dark behind us,
Only the creaking cart
Disturbing their sorrowful serenity.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

Sylvia Townsend Warner was born December 1893 at Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex, where her father was a school-master. From 1916 to 1926 she worked on the preparation of the critical edition of *Tudor Church Music*, a vast and learned compilation in ten volumes, of which she was one of the four editors. Research work in the music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was not only her occupation but her preoccupation, and it was not until 1922 that she started writing as a by-product.

Although she first attracted wide attention with *Lolly Willowes: or The Loving Huntsman*, which was the first "book-of-the-month" in America in 1926, her literary début was made with a volume of verse, *The Espalier* (1925). There followed two more books of prose, quaintly misnamed novels by the publishers: *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* (1927) and *The True Heart* (1929). Three years after her first volume, her second book of poems appeared, *Time Importuned* (1928).

Although her work seems to fall into two categories, it actually forms a unified expression. The poems, objective, sharply characterized, compact with drama, are condensed stories; the novels are poetry from beginning to end. *Lolly Willowes* is a fantasy which alternates between the unashamedly tender and the lightly terrible. *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* adds compassionate understanding to extravaganza; fantasy turns here to philosophy whose motto implies surrender instead of possession in love. *The True Heart* is the simplest and the deepest of her larger works. Seemingly an idyll of Victorian England, it is really one of the oldest love stories, the classic tale of Psyche and Eros retold. Although no critic seems to have noted the fact, Miss Warner has supplied sufficient hints; "Sukey" is obviously an Anglicized Psyche; the mad Love, Eros, is the witless "Eric"; Venus is less than half-disguised as "Mrs. Seaborn."

Thus all of Miss Warner's work is a paradoxical union of subtlety and simplicity, with no sense of strain between these opposites. Each quality is equally characteristic of this author; and if the mode of expression tends toward increasing simplicity,

it is as though the subtle brain were being counseled if not always controlled by the simple—and the true—heart.

The element which holds these contraries in so nice a balance is the rightness, the so-to-speak connoisseurship of Miss Warner's taste. She can be utterly exquisite when elegance dictates the mode; her coarseness is no less in place when theme and measure demand rudeness. Thus *Time Importuned* has the same sparse imagery and no little of the earth smell of which *The Espalier* is redolent, but the rustic note is not so broad; the rough country humor which underlines her bucolic comedies turns to "rustic elegies" without effort or affectation. "Nelly Trim," one of the thrillingly stern poems of this generation, finds its complement in "The Rival"; the neat incisiveness of "The Alarum" is matched by the bitter-sweetness of "Song."

Craftsmen will be quick to detect Miss Warner's innovations. She is particularly resourceful in her use of the unrhymed line; she is as adroit in her mingling of assonantal and dissonantal rhyme as Wilfred Owen and Humbert Wolfe. But it is unfair to place too much emphasis on technique. Each reader will discover a different quality on which to lay stress: the poet's marked accent; or her half-modern, half-archaic blend of naïveté and erudition; or the low-pitched but tart tone of voice, like a feminine Thomas Hardy. Every year seems to distill Miss Warner's gift nearer to its basic essence. "Modo and Alciphron," which has not yet appeared in book form, illustrates this quality in which *grotesquerie* and metaphysics so strangely combine. "Killing No Murder" and "Building in Stone," two other uncollected poems, abandon by-play and raillery in their grave music and graver implications.

Greatly gifted, she barely misses greatness. Ironic, critical, compassionate, her mind rules her emotions a fraction too well. She cannot quite give herself to a self-forgetting, world-forgetting ecstasy. Miss Warner is a philosopher, but never a labored one. She is as one who walks, light-footed, a long road, singing her long thoughts to a light—though usually legato—measure.

FOUR EPITAPHS

John Bird, a laborer, lies here,
Who served the earth for sixty year
With spade and mattock, drill and plow;
But never found it kind till now.

*

I, an unwedded wandering dame,
For quiet into the country came:
Here, hailed it; but did not foretell
I'd stay so long and rest so well.

*

I, Richard Kent, beneath these stones,
Sheltered my old and trembling bones;
But my best manhood, quick and brave,
Lies buried in another grave.

*

Her grieving parents cradled here
Ann Monk, a gracious child and dear.
Lord, let this epitaph suffice:
Early to Bed and Early to Rise.

COUNTRY THOUGHT

Idbury bells are ringing
And Westcote has just begun,
And down in the valley
Ring the bells of Bledington.

To hear all the church-bells
Ring-ringing together,
Chiming so pleasantly
As if nothing were the matter.

The notion might come
To some religious thinker,
That The Lord God Almighty
Is a traveling tinker,

Who travels through England
From north to south,
And sits him at the roadside
With a pipe in his mouth,

A-tinkling and a-tinkering
To mend up the souls
That week-day wickedness
Has worn into holes.

And yet there is not
One tinker, but Three—
One at Westcote, One at Bledington
And One at Idbury.

NELLY TRIM

"Like men riding,
The mist from the sea
Drives down the valley
And baffles me."
"Enter, traveler,
Whoever you be."

By lamplight confronted
He staggered and peered;
Like a wet bramble
Was his beard.
"Sit down, stranger,
You look a-feared."

Shudders rent him
To the bone,
The wet ran off him
And speckled the stone.
"Dost bide here alone, maid?"
"Yes, alone."

As he sat down
In the chimney-nook
Over his shoulder
He cast a look,
As if the night
Were pursuing; she took

A handful of brash
To mend the fire,
He eyed her close
As the flame shot higher;
He spoke—and the cattle
Moved in the byre.

"Though you should heap
Your fire with wood,
'Twouldn't warm me
Nor do no good,
Unless you first warm me
As a maiden should."

With looks unwavering,
With breath unstirred,
She took off her clothes
Without a word,
And stood up naked
And white as a curd.

He breathed her to him
With famished sighs,
Against her bosom
He sheltered his eyes,
And warmed his hands
Between her thighs.

Strangely assembled
In the quiet room,
Alone alight
Amidst leagues of gloom,
So brave a bride,
So sad a groom;

And strange love-traffic
Between these two;
Nor mean, nor shamefaced—
As though they'd do
Something more solemn
Than they knew:

As though by this greeting
Which chance had willed
'Twixt him so silent
And her so stilled,
Some pledge or compact
Were fulfilled,

Made for all time
In times unknown,
'Twixt man and woman
Standing alone
In mirk night
By a tall stone.

His wayfaring terrors
All cast aside,
Brave now the bridegroom
Quitted the bride;
As he came, departing—
Undenied.

But once from darkness
Turned back his sight
To where in the doorway
She held a light:
"Good-by to you, maiden."
"Stranger, good night."

Long time has this woman
Been bedded alone.
The house where she slept
Lies stone on stone:
She'd not know her ash-tree,
So warped has it grown.

But yet this story
Is told of her
As a memorial;
And some aver
She'd comfort thus any
Poor traveler.

A wanton, you say—
Yet where's the spouse,
However true
To her marriage-vows,
To whom the lot
Of the earth-born allows

More than this?—
To comfort the care
Of a stranger, bound
She knows not where,
And afraid of the dark,
As his fathers were.

THE ALARUM

With its rat's tooth the clock
Gnaws away delight.
Piece by piece, piece by piece
It will gnaw away tonight,

Till the coiled spring released
Rouses me with a hiss
To a day, to another night
Less happy than this.

And yet my own hands wound it
To keep watch while I slept;
For though they be with sorrow
Appointments must be kept.

AFTER HE HAD GONE

After he had gone the wind rose,
Buffeting the house and rumbling in the chimney,
And I thought: It will roar against him like a lion
As onward he goes.

Seven miles before him, all told—
Chilled will be the lips I kissed so warm at parting,
Kissed in vain; for he's forth into the wind, and kisses
Won't keep out the cold.

Closer should I have kissed, fondlier prayed:
Pleasant is the room in the wakeful firelight,
And within is the bed, arrayed with peace and safety,
Would he had stayed!

ELIZABETH

"Elizabeth the Beloved"—
So much says the stone
That is all with weather defaced,
With moss overgrown.

But if to husband or child,
Brother or sire, most dear
Is past deciphering;
This only is clear:

That once she was beloved,
Was Elizabeth,
And is now beloved no longer,
If it be not of Death.

TRIUMPH OF SENSIBILITY

"Tiger, strolling at my side,
Why have you unbound the zone
Of your individual pride?
Why so meek did you come sneaking
After me as I walked alone?

"Since the goat and since the deer
Wait the shattering death you wield
In a constancy of fear,
By your stripes, my strange disciple,
Am I also to be healed?"

"Woman, it was your tender heart
Did my bloody heart compel.
Master-mistress of my art,
Past my wit of wrath your pity,
Ruthless and inexorable.

"I hunt flesh by fallible sense;
You a more exquisite prey pursue
With a finer prescience,
And lap up another's unhappiness:
Woman, let me learn of you."

SAD GREEN

The glass falls lower,
And lowers the wet sky,
And by a fire sit I
Hearing the lawn-mower

Nearing and waning—
Howbeit out of tune
The essential voice of June,
Patient and uncomplaining;

For though by frost and thunder
Summer be overthrown,
The grass plat must be mown
And the daisies kept under.

SONG

She has left me, my pretty,
Like a fleeting of apple-blows
She has left her loving husband,
And who she has gone to
The Lord only knows.

She has left me, my pretty,
A needle in a shirt,
Her pink flannelette bedgown,
And a pair of pattens
Caked over with dirt.

I care not for the pattens,
Let 'em lie in the mold;
But the pretty pink bedgown
Will comfort my lumbago
When midnights are cold;

And the shirt I will wear it,
And the needle may bide.
Let it prick, let it rankle,
Let my flesh remember
How she lay against my side!

THE RIVAL

The farmer's wife looked out of the dairy:
She saw her husband in the yard;
She said: "A woman's life is hard,
The chimney smokes, the churn's contrary."
She said:
"I of all women am the most ill-starred.

"Five sons I've borne and seven daughters,
And the last of them is on my knee.
Finer children you could not see.
Twelve times I've put my neck in the halter:
You'd think
So much might knit my husband's love to me.

"But no! Though I should serve him double
He keeps another love outdoors,
Who thieves his strength, who drains his stores,
Who haunts his mind with fret and trouble;
I pray
God's curse may light on such expensive whores.

"I am grown old before my season,
Weather and care have worn me down;
Each year delves deeper in my frown,
I've lost my shape and for good reason:
But she
Yearly puts on young looks like an Easter gown.

"And year by year she has betrayed him
With blight and mildew, rain and drought,
Smut, scab, and murrain, all the rout;
But he forgets the tricks she's played him
When first
The fields give a good smell and the leaves put out.

"Aye, come the Spring, and the gulls keening,
Over her strumpet lap he'll ride,
Watching those wasteful fields and wide,
Where the darkened tilth will soon be greening,
With looks
Fond and severe, as looks the groom on bride."

KILLING NO MURDER

You, master of delays,
Need no artillery but days
One after one
Loosed off in blank against hope's garrison;
No art,
Save doing nothing, to undo a heart.

MODO AND ALCIPHRON

In the Lybian desert I
Saw a hermit's carcass lie,
And a melancholy fiend
Over the battered bosom leaned.

Black as a widow dead for love,
Motionless he drooped above;
Only his tail from side to side
Switched the sand with narrow stride.

"Grievest thou, imp, to see thy spoil
Lie thus quenched on burning soil?
Rinsed the brain, and the loin's lust
Safely reconciled with dust?

"Or perchance thy mournful hide
Dreads how well the lash will chide
When Pope Satan makes thee skip
For a negligent stewardship?"

With a sullen silence he
Raised his head, and looked at me,
Looked me through, and looked away,
Nor for all that I could say

Looked again. Quoth I, I've matched
Patience with yours; and so I watched
The slow, sun-swollen daytime through
To mark what this strange fiend would do.

Cramped and cold I woke from sleep
To hear the fiend begin to weep.
Twinkling in starlight the tears ran
Along his beard, and he began:

"Dead is the holy Alciphron!
Modo's occupation's gone.
All my pretty joys are sped,
Gentle Alciphron is dead!

"Never was there saint so mild
And so easily beguiled;
'Twas pure pleasure to torment
Anything so innocent.

"Danced I, gleaming in a dress
Of nimble maiden nakedness,
His prompt heart with hastening beat
Drummed the measure for my feet,

"And his glances whipped me round,
Till toppling in a dizzy swound
With long recovery I would twine
About him like the conjugal vine,

"While my forked and flickering tongue,
Constant as summer lightning, hung
On the scant flesh that wrapped his bones,
Till sighs long-husbanded, chuckling groans,

"Vouched for the pleasures he endured;
By thorns such pleasures must be cured,
And when most thick the thin blood fell
I knew that I had pleased him well.

"Then at other times I'd sit
Praising his spiritual wit,
Assuring him how deftly he
Could comprehend the Trinity,

"Flesh Christ, with never a trespassing glide
To error on this or t'other side,
Show how original sin doth breed
Inherent in the genital seed,

"And every tinkling sophist quell,
Who questions that the troops of hell
Pester the saint upon his knees,
Actual and numerous as his fleas.

"But most of all 'twas my delight
To cajole him from the elected night
Wherewith the christian cowls his sense
From the allurement and offense

"Of a lost planet. I would be
Damnation singing from a tree
With voice more wildly ravishing
For being damned, or in a spring

"With chill adulteries surprise
Him parched; often I thieved his eyes
To love me in lizard, or in braid
Of sun begetting from a shade

"A spawn of dancing babies—all
Accursed as their original.
In many a salad I laid a snare
Of joy that he on such poor fare

"Fared well, or else on wafts of thyme
Into the warded brain would climb
Unchallenged, or tweaked him by the nose
With the remembrance of a rose.

"Thus did we wrestle, and never chaste
Turtles did rarer dalliance taste,
Thus mixed our opposites, as true
As plighted dock and nettle do,

"Thus to all time example gave
Of the mutual comfort saint should have
With devil, devil with saint, and thus
I clean forgot how envious

"In his unmated splendor sits
He, the Tyrant—"
As oak splits
Before the ax, and falls with loud
Indignant groan, so groaned, so bowed,

The fiend, and lay in silence long;
But once or twice against the throng
Of stars raised up a blackening fist;
Then mourned, as mourning from a mist:

"Alas, how faithless man can be
To a fiend's eternity!
Into untiring malice doomed,
Virtue as long-breathed I presumed;

"With never a care save which art next
To ply I looked on time unvexed,
Nor, in this plenty of sand, did doubt
The tale of his was running out.

"So Alciphron grew old, though I
Knew it not. This gew-gawed sky
Its virgin hood of gray had on,
And light was scarce, when Alciphron

"Awoke, and laid his hand on me,
And stared east. *Haec dies,* said he,
Quam fecit Dominus. I too
Looked east, and saw a path run through

"The kindling cloud. It bruised my gaze
To meet the intolerable blaze,
The ostentatious Rose, the blare
And uproar of light which threatened there;

"But Alciphron beheld and smiled,
Crowing for pleasure like a child
Who views its promised sugarplum:
Then, with a crash which has left dumb

"All thunder since, about us came
A simpering angel in a flame,
Who seized upon redemption's prey,
And bore him, like a child, away.

"Thus, O woe, I'm left alone
With this unanswering flesh and bone.
All my pretty joys are sped,
Gentle Alciphron is dead!

"Nothing is left me of my joy
But this contemptuous broken toy.
Modo's occupation's gone,
Dead is the holy Alciphron!"

THE ABSENCE

How happy I can be with my love away!
No care comes all day;
Like a dapple of clouds the hours pass by,
Time stares from the sky
But does not see me where I lie in the hay,
So still do I lie.

Like points of dew the stars well in the skies;
Taller the trees rise.
Dis-shadowed, unselved, I wander slow,
My thoughts flow and flow,
But whither tending I know not, nor need surmise,
So softly I go,

Till to my quiet bed I must undress—
Then I say, Alas!
That he whom, too anxious or too gay,
I torment all day
Can never know me in my harmlessness
While he is away.

BUILDING IN STONE

God is still glorified—
To him the wakeful arch holds up in prayer,
Nightly dumb glass keeps vigil to declare
His East, and Eastertide;

The constant pavement lays
Its flatness for his feet, each pier acquaints
Neighbor, him housed; time-thumbed, forgotten saints
Do not forget to praise;

All parcels of the whole,
Each hidden, each revealed, each thrust and stress,
Antiphonally interlocked, confess
Him, stay, and him, control.

Whether upon the fens
Anchored, with all her canvas and all her shrouds,
Ely signal him to willows and clouds
And cattle, or whether Wren's

Unperturbed dome, above
The city roaring with mechanic throat
And climbing in layer on layer of Babel, float
Like an escaping dove,

Or whether in countryside
Stationed all humble and holy churches keep
Faith with the faith of those who lie asleep,
God is still glorified;

Since by the steadfastness
Of his most mute creation man conjures
—Man, so soon hushed—the silence which endures
To bear in mind, and bless.

Dorothy L. Sayers was born in 1893 at Cathedral Choir School, Oxford, where her father was headmaster. She was graduated from Somerville College, Oxford, in 1915, receiving First Honors in Medieval Literature and being one of the first women to take an Oxford degree.

She began her literary life with poetry, a predilection that brought her (in common with Belloc and Chesterton) to the writing of detective stories. Besides creating Lord Peter Wimsey, whose chief pursuits are the collecting of incunabula and the detecting of criminals, Miss Sayers edited the mammoth *The Omnibus of Crime* (1929), without which no library of mystery and horror is complete. Besides her own verse, she has translated one of the loveliest of the medieval romances from the twelfth century French, *Tristran in Brittany* (1929).

CAROL

The Ox said to the Ass, said he, all on a Christmas night:
"Do you hear the pipe of the shepherds a-whistling over the hill?
That is the angels' music they play for their delight,
'Glory to God in the highest and peace upon earth, goodwill' . . .
Nowell, nowell, my masters, God lieth low in stall,
And the poor labouring Ox was here before you all."

The Ass said to the Ox, said he, all on a Christmas day:
"Do you hear the golden bridles come clinking out of the east?
Those are the three wise Mages that ride from far away
To Bethlehem in Jewry to have their lore increased. . . .
Nowell, nowell, my masters, God lieth low in stall,
And the poor, foolish Ass was here before you all."

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Aldous (Leonard) Huxley, grandson of Thomas Huxley, was born in 1894 at Godalming and educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. From 1919 to 1921, he was on the editorial staff of *The Athenaeum* and, although he has recently devoted himself entirely to prose, his first publications were in verse; his three early

volumes, *The Burning Wheel* (1916), *The Defeat of Youth* (1918) and *Leda* (1920), being in that medium.

As a poet, Huxley is at least three writers. At times, he is a precise, rather academic picture-maker, rhyming his subjects in the broad, traditional manner. At other times—and far more frequently—he is a disillusioned ironist, a conscious imitator of Rimbaud and Laforgue, a sardonic *Pierrot lunaire.* (The latter vein is best illustrated by the poem "Male and Female Created He Them" and the bitter "Soles Occidere et Redire Possunt" in *Leda.*) More rarely, his poetry strikes the somber note which finds its fullest expression in the novel *Antic Hay* (1923), the note of tragic despair echoing in a vast emptiness. *Brief Candles* (1930) contains four brilliant and ruthless novelettes.

In 1928 Huxley published his largest and most uncomfortable novel, *Point-Counter-Point.* Its theme was futility, disillusion having already been the motivating power—or lack of power—in his short stories, *Limbo* (1920), *Mortal Coils* (1922), *Two or Three Graces* (1926). Active as a feuilletonist, his sketches sometimes attained the dignity of essays, three volumes of them being published since the initial *On the Margin* (1923). If journalism and the impulse to overproduce do not engulf him, Huxley's versatility may well reveal him as one of the more significant if unhappy recorders of his period.

SONG OF POPLARS

Shepherd, to yon tall poplars tune your flute:
Let them pierce keenly, subtly shrill,
The slow blue rumor of the hill;
Let the grass cry with an anguish of evening gold,
And the great sky be mute.

Then hearken how the poplar trees unfold
Their buds, yet close and gummed and blind,
In airy leafage of the mind,
Rustling in silvery whispers the twin-hued scales
That fade not nor grow old.

"Poplars and fountains and you cypress spires
Springing in dark and rusty flame,
Seek you aught that hath a name?
Or say, say: Are you all an upward agony
Of undefined desires?

"Say, are you happy in the golden march
Of sunlight all across the day?
Or do you watch the uncertain way
That leads the withering moon on cloudy stairs
Over the heaven's wide arch?

"Is it towards sorrow or towards joy you lift
The sharpness of your trembling spears?
Or do you seek, through the gray tears
That blur the sky, in the heart of the triumphing blue,
A deeper, calmer rift?"

So; I have tuned my music to the trees,
And there were voices, dim below
Their shrillness, voices swelling slow
In the blue murmur of hills, and a golden cry
And then vast silences.

FIFTH PHILOSOPHER'S SONG

A million million spermatozoa,
All of them alive:
Out of their cataclysm but one poor Noah
Dare hope to survive.

And among that billion minus one
Might have chanced to be
Shakespeare, another Newton, a new Donne—
But the One was Me.

Shame to have ousted your betters thus,
Taking ark while the others remained outside!
Better for all of us, forward Homunculus,
If you'd quietly died!

A SUNSET

Over against the triumph and the close—
Amber and green and rose—
Of this short day,
The pale ghost of the moon grows living-bright
Once more, as the last light
Ebbs slowly away.

Darkening the fringes of these western glories
The black phantasmagories
Of cloud advance
With noiseless footing—vague and villainous shapes,
Wrapped in their ragged fustian capes,
Of some grotesque romance.
But overhead where, like a pool between
Dark rocks, the sky is green
And clear and deep,
Floats windlessly a cloud, with curving breast
Flushed by the fiery west,
In god-like sleep . . .
And in my mind opens a sudden door
That lets me see once more
A little room
With night beyond the window, chill and damp,
And one green-lighted lamp
Tempering the gloom,
While here within, close to me, touching me
(Even the memory
Of my desire
Shakes me like fear), you sit with scattered hair;
And all your body bare
Before the fire
Is lapped about with rosy flame. . . . But still,
Here on the lonely hill,
I walk alone;
Silvery green is the moon's lamp overhead,
The cloud sleeps warm and red,
And you are gone.

CHARLES HAMILTON SORLEY

Charles Hamilton Sorley, who promised greater things than any of the younger poets, was born at Old Aberdeen in May, 1895. Son of Professor Sorley of Cambridge, he studied at Marlborough College and University College, Oxford. He was finishing his studies abroad and was on a walking-tour along the banks of the Moselle when war came. Sorley returned home to receive an immediate commission in the 7th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. In

August, 1915, at the age of 20, he was made a captain. On October 13, 1915, he was killed in action near Hulluch.

Jingoism, violent propaganda, falsely patriotic slogans could not obscure his candid vision. "There is no such thing as a just war," he wrote. "What we are doing is casting out Satan by Satan." At nineteen, while he was training at Shorncliffe, he dared to write, "England—I am sick of the sound of the word. In training to fight for England, I am training to fight for that deliberate hypocrisy, that terrible middle-class sloth of outlook and appalling 'imaginative indolence' that has marked us out from generation to generation. . . . Indeed I think that after the War all brave men will renounce their country and confess that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Such electrifying sentences, as well as his independent appreciations of Masefield, Richard Jefferies, and Thomas Hardy, are to be found in the posthumous *Letters of Charles Sorley* (1919). These letters perform the same service to Sorley the poet as the letters of Keats perform in rounding out that greater poet who also died at the beginning of manhood.

Sorley left but one book, *Marlborough and Other Poems*, a posthumous collection, edited by his father, published in 1916. The verse contained in it is sometimes rough but never rude. Although he admired Masefield, loveliness rather than liveliness was his aim. Restraint, tolerance, and a dignity unusual for a boy of twenty distinguish his verse. There is scarcely a line in Sorley's work which does not breathe the spirit of compelling exaltation.

Whether it blows with breezy youth in "The Song of the Ungirt Runners" or burns with ardor in the sonnets, his poetry is, in the fullest sense, radiant. What Sorley might have accomplished is apparent though indefinable. He died before he was twenty-one.

TWO SONNETS

I

Saints have adored the lofty soul of you.
Poets have whitened at your high renown.
We stand among the many millions who
Do hourly wait to pass your pathway down.

You, so familiar, once were strange: we tried
To live as of your presence unaware.
But now in every road on every side
We see your straight and steadfast signpost there.

I think it like that signpost in my land
Hoary and tall, which pointed me to go
Upward, into the hills, on the right hand,
Where the mists swim and the winds shriek and blow,
A homeless land and friendless, but a land
I did not know and that I wished to know.

II

Such, such is Death: no triumph: no defeat:
Only an empty pail, a slate rubbed clean,
A merciful putting away of what has been.

And this we know: Death is not Life effete,
Life crushed, the broken pail. We who have seen
So marvelous things know well the end not yet.

Victor and vanquished are a-one in death:
Coward and brave: friend, foe. Ghosts do not say,
"Come, what was your record when you drew breath?"
But a big blot has hid each yesterday
So poor, so manifestly incomplete.
And your bright Promise, withered long and sped,
Is touched; stirs, rises, opens and grows sweet
And blossoms and is you, when you are dead.

THE SONG OF THE UNGIRT RUNNERS

We swing ungirded hips,
And lightened are our eyes,
The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
We know not whom we trust
Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
And does not leave them warm.

Does the tearing tempest pause?
Do the tree tops ask it why?
So we run without a cause
'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
But the storm the water whips
And the wave howls to the skies.
The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

TO GERMANY

You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But gropers both, through fields of thought confined,
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.

When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm,
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.

ROOKS

There where the rusty iron lies,
The rooks are cawing all the day.
Perhaps no man, until he dies,
Will understand them, what they say.

The evening makes the sky like clay.
The slow wind waits for night to rise.
The world is half content. But they

Still trouble all the trees with cries,
That know, and cannot put away,
The yearning to the soul that flies
From day to night, from night to day.

ALL THE HILLS AND VALES

All the hills and vales along
Earth is bursting into song,
And the singers are the chaps
Who are going to die perhaps.
O sing, marching men,
Till the valleys ring again.
Give your gladness to earth's keeping,
So be glad, when you are sleeping.

Cast away regret and rue,
Think what you are marching to.
Little live, great pass.
Jesus Christ and Barabbas
Were found the same day.
This died, that went his way.
So sing with joyful breath.
For why, you are going to death.
Teeming earth will surely store
All the gladness that you pour.

Earth that never doubts nor fears,
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,
Shall rejoice and blossom too
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men marching
On the road to death, sing!
Pour your gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead.

From the hills and valleys earth
Shouts back the sound of mirth,
Tramp of feet and lilt of song
Ringing all the road along.
Ringing, swinging, glad song-throwing,
Earth will echo still when foot
Lies numb and voice mute.

On, marching men, on
To the gates of death with song.
Sow your gladness for earth's reaping,
So you may be glad, though sleeping.
Strew your gladness on earth's bed,
So be merry, so be dead.

ROBERT GRAVES

Robert (Ranke) Graves, son of the Irish poet and song-writer Alfred Percival Graves, was born July 26, 1895. He was educated at Charterhouse and Oxford, after which he joined the British Expeditionary Force and served three times in France, in the same regiment as Siegfried Sassoon. His activities were as numerous as incongruous. He won a prize at the Olympic games, lost his capital as an unsuccessful shopkeeper, was the biographer of Colonel T. E. Lawrence, and taught literature in Cairo.

Graves was one of the writers who, roused by the War and giving himself to his country, refused to glorify warfare or chant new hymns of hate. Like Sassoon, Graves also reacted against the storm of fury and blood-lust, but, fortified by a lighter and more whimsical spirit, where Sassoon is violent, Graves is volatile; where Sassoon grew bitter, Graves was almost blithe.

An easy gayety rises from *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1917), a surprising and healing humor that is warmly individual. In *Country Sentiment* (1919) Graves turns to a more rustic simplicity. But a buoyant fancy ripples beneath the most archaic of his ballads and a quaintly original turn of mind saves them from their own echoes.

With *Country Sentiment,* Graves, so one was ready to believe, had established his characteristics. His gift was charming rather than startling, playful and lightly *macabre* rather than profound; qualities, which, while not those of a great poet, were distinctly those of an enjoyable one. The young poet seemed happy in his combinations (and mutations) of two traditionally English forms: the ballad and the Mother Goose rhyme. "A Frosty Night," "True

Johnny," "It's a Queer Time," "Neglectful Edward," "I Wonder What It Feels Like to Be Drowned?" are some of the measures written out of a surplus and careless fertility, with little effort, scarcely with thought, and with one eye winking at the Nursery.

But Thought, that enemy of the lyric impulse, spread her theory-spun snare for Graves and soon he was laboring in her toils. He began to analyze, pare, probe, to examine ways, means and the creative process—his own as well as others'. No less than seven volumes were devoted to interpretation and technique; *On English Poetry* (1922), *The Meaning of Dreams* (1924), *Poetic Unreason* (1925), *Contemporary Techniques of Poetry* (1925), *Another Future of Poetry* (1926), *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, the last in collaboration with Laura Riding (1928). His volumes of verse during this period reflect changing preoccupations. *The Pier Glass* (1921), *Whipperginny* (1923), *Mock Beggar Hall* (1924), *Welchman's Hose* (1925), *The Marmosite's Miscellany*, issued pseudonymously as by "John Doyle" (1925), turn from fancy to philosophy, from philosophy to metaphysics, from Skelton to Freud.

One sees the kaleidoscopic shifts only too plainly in *Collected Poems 1914-1926* and *Poems—1929* (1929) where the whimsical and amatory run through war-verse and "poems of unrest and transition" to the heavily intellectual and awkwardly involved. The later Graves is scarcely the poet who once nonchalantly wrote:

> May sudden justice overtake
> And snap the froward pen,
> That old and palsied poets shake
> Against the minds of men.
>
> Blasphemers trusting to hold caught
> In far-flung webs of ink
> The utmost ends of human thought
> Till nothing's left to think.
>
> But may the gift of heavenly peace
> And glory for all time
> Keep the boy Tom who, tending geese,
> First made the nursery rhyme.

Thus the early Graves (*circa* 1916) seems to be admonishing—and with good reason—the mature but unstabilized experimentalist, who, some dozen years later, attempts the dislocations of James Joyce, echoes the Gertrude Stein song, and flounders in a morass of speculations. Graves began as one who had simplicity rather than acquired *simplesse*. He was a true innocent. By taking thought unsuited to his intuitive temperament he has not increased his stature. He has lost innocence without gaining wisdom.

Much of this intellectual and emotional indecision is reflected in *Good-by to All That* (1930). In this exciting and candid autobiography, Graves (as is made plain by more than the title) waves a public farewell to his youth. Without bitterness or bravado, the poet, like his friends Sassoon and Blunden, describes the horror of an offensive, the drudgery of trench-life, the abuses of officialdom, intensifying his pages with a hatred of injustice in any form. Unlike his fellows, he is even more candid in revealing the stress of his personal—and highly private—encounters. *Good-by to All That* may, as a reviewer implied, "suffer little from that instinctive good taste which is to the twentieth century the unpardonable sin," but, in its undeviating honesty, it rounds and completes not only the portrait of a poet but of a period.

NEGLECTFUL EDWARD

Nancy

Edward, back from the Indian Sea,
"What have you brought for Nancy?"

Edward

"A rope of pearls and a gold earring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing.
A carven tooth, a box with a key—"

Nancy

"God be praised you are back," says she,
"Have you nothing more for your Nancy?"

Edward

"Long as I sailed the Indian Sea
I gathered all for your fancy:
Toys and silk and jewels I bring,
And a bird of the East that will not sing:
What more can you want, dear girl, from me?"

Nancy

"God be praised you are back," said she,
"Have you nothing better for Nancy?"

Edward

"Safe and home from the Indian Sea,
And nothing to take your fancy?"

Nancy

"You can keep your pearls and your gold earring,
And your bird of the East that will not sing,
But, Ned, have you nothing more for me
Than heathenish gew-gaw toys?" says she,
"Have you nothing better for Nancy?"

IT'S A QUEER TIME

It's hard to know if you're alive or dead
When steel and fire go roaring through your head.

One moment you'll be crouching at your gun
Traversing, mowing heaps down half in fun:
The next, you choke and clutch at your right breast—
No time to think—leave all—and off you go . . .
To Treasure Island where the Spice winds blow,
To lovely groves of mango, quince and lime—
Breathe no good-by, but ho, for the Red West!
It's a queer time.

You're charging madly at them yelling "Fag!"
When somehow something gives and your feet drag.
You fall and strike your head; yet feel no pain
And find . . . you're digging tunnels through the hay
In the Big Barn, 'cause it's a rainy day.

Oh, springy hay, and lovely beams to climb!
You're back in the old sailor suit again.
It's a queer time.

Or you'll be dozing safe in your dug-out—
A great roar—the trench shakes and falls about—
You're struggling, gasping, struggling, then . . . *hullo!*
Elsie comes tripping gayly down the trench,
Hanky to nose—that lyddite makes a stench—

Getting her pinafore all over grime.
Funny! because she died ten years ago!
It's a queer time.

The trouble is, things happen much too quick;
Up jump the Boches, rifles thump and click,
You stagger, and the whole scene fades away:
Even good Christians don't like passing straight
From Tipperary or their Hymn of Hate
To Alleluiah-chanting, and the chime
Of golden harps . . . and . . I'm not well today . . .
It's a queer time.

A PINCH OF SALT[1]

When a dream is born in you
With a sudden clamorous pain,
When you know the dream is true
And lovely, with no flaw nor stain,
O then, be careful, or with sudden clutch
You'll hurt the delicate thing you prize so much.

Dreams are like a bird that mocks,
Flirting the feathers of his tail.
When you seize at the salt box,
Over the hedge you'll see him sail.
Old birds are neither caught with salt nor chaff:
They watch you from the apple bough and laugh.

Poet, never chase the dream.
Laugh yourself, and turn away.
Mask your hunger; let it seem
Small matter if he come or stay;
But when he nestles in your hand at last,
Close up your fingers tight and hold him fast.

I WONDER WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE DROWNED?

Look at my knees,
That island rising from the steamy seas!

[1] Compare the poem on the same theme on page 390.

The candle's a tall lightship; my two hands
Are boats and barges anchored to the sands,
With mighty cliffs all round;
They're full of wine and riches from far lands. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

I can make caves,
By lifting up the island and huge waves
And storms, and then with head and ears well under
Blow bubbles with a monstrous roar like thunder,
A bull-of-Bashan sound.
The seas run high and the boats split asunder . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

The thin soap slips
And slithers like a shark under the ships.
My toes are on the soap-dish—that's the effect
Of my huge storms; an iron steamer's wrecked.
The soap slides round and round;
He's biting the old sailors, I expect. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

ESCAPE

(*August 6, 1916.* Officer Previously Reported Died of Wounds, Now Reported Wounded: Graves, Capt. R., Royal Welsh Fusiliers)

. . . But I *was* dead, an hour or more:
I woke when I'd already passed the door
That Cerberus guards and half-way down the road
To Lethe, as an old Greek sign-post showed.
Above me, on my stretcher swinging by,
I saw new stars in the sub-terrene sky,
A Cross, a Rose in Bloom, a Cage with Bars,
And a barbed Arrow feathered with fine stars.
I felt the vapors of forgetfulness
Float in my nostrils: Oh, may Heaven bless
Dear Lady Proserpine, who saw me wake
And, stooping over me, for Henna's sake
Cleared my poor buzzing head and sent me back
Breathless, with leaping heart along the track.

After me roared and clattered angry hosts
Of demons, heroes, and policemen-ghosts.
"Life, life! I can't be dead, I won't be dead:
Damned if I'll die for any one," I said . . .
Cerberus stands and grins above me now,
Wearing three heads, lion and lynx and sow.
"Quick, a revolver! but my Webley's gone,
Stolen . . . no bombs . . . no knife . . . (the crowd swarms on,
Bellows, hurls stones) . . . not even a honeyed sop . . .
Nothing . . . Good Cerberus . . . Good dog . . . But stop!
Stay! . . . A great luminous thought . . . I do believe
There's still some morphia that I bought on leave."
Then swiftly Cerberus' wide mouths I cram
With Army biscuit smeared with Tickler's jam;
And Sleep lurks in the luscious plum and apple.
He crunches, swallows, stiffens, seems to grapple
With the all-powerful poppy . . . then a snore,
A crash; the beast blocks up the corridor
With monstrous hairy carcase, red and dun—
Too late: for I've sped through.
O Life! O Sun!

THE TRAVELER'S CURSE AFTER MISDIRECTION

(*From the Welsh*)

May they wander stage by stage
Of the same vain pilgrimage,
Stumbling on, age after age,
Night and day, mile after mile,
At each and every step, a stile;
At each and every stile, withal,
May they catch their feet and fall;
At each and every fall they take,
May a bone within them break;
And may the bones that break within
Not be, for variation's sake,
Now rib, now thigh, now arm, now shin,
But always, without fail, THE NECK.

SONG: ONE HARD LOOK

Small gnats that fly
In hot July
And lodge in sleeping ears,
Can rouse therein
A trumpet's din
With Day of Judgment fears.

Small mice at night
Can wake more fright
Than lions at midday.
A straw will crack
The camel's back;
There is no easier way.

One smile relieves
A heart that grieves
Though deadly sad it be,
And one hard look
Can close the book
That lovers love to see.

A FROSTY NIGHT

MOTHER:

Alice, dear, what ails you,
  Dazed and white and shaken?
Has the chill night numbed you?
  Is it fright you have taken?

ALICE:

Mother, I am very well,
  I felt never better,
Mother, do not hold me so,
  Let me write my letter.

MOTHER:

Sweet, my dear, what ails you?

ALICE:

No, but I am well;
The night was cold and frosty,
There's no more to tell.

MOTHER:

Aye, the night was frosty,
Coldly gaped the moon,
Yet the birds seemed twittering
Through green boughs of June.

Soft and thick the snow lay,
Stars danced in the sky.
Not all the lambs of May-day
Skip so bold and high.

Your feet were dancing, Alice,
Seemed to dance on air,
You looked a ghost or angel
In the starlight there.

Your eyes were frosted starlight,
Your heart fire and snow.
Who was it said, "I love you"?

ALICE:

Mother, let me go!

IN THE WILDERNESS

Christ of His gentleness
Thirsting and hungering,
Walked in the wilderness;
Soft words of grace He spoke
Unto lost desert-folk
That listened wondering.
He heard the bitterns call
From ruined palace-wall,

Answered them brotherly.
He held communion
With the she-pelican
Of lonely piety.
Basilisk, cockatrice,
Flocked to his homilies,
With mail of dread device,
With monstrous barbèd slings,
With eager dragon-eyes;
Great bats on leathern wings
And poor blind broken things,
Foul in their miseries.
And ever with Him went,
Of all His wanderings
Comrade, with ragged coat,
Gaunt ribs—poor innocent—
Bleeding foot, burning throat,
The guileless old scapegoat;
For forty nights and days
Followed in Jesus' ways,
Sure guard behind Him kept,
Tears like a lover wept.

A FORCED MUSIC

Of Love he sang, full hearted one,
But when the song was done,
The King demanded more,
Aye, and commanded more.
The boy found nothing for encore,
Words, melodies—none,
Ashamed the song's glad rise and plaintive fall
Had so charmed King and Queen and all.

He sang the same verse once again
But urging less Love's pain.
With altered time and key
He showed variety,
Seemed to refresh the harmony
Of his only strain,
So still the glad rise and the plaintive fall
Could charm the King, the Queen and all.

He of his song then wearying ceased,
But was not yet released:
The Queen's request was, "More,"
And her behest was "More."
He played of random notes some score,
Then suddenly let his twangling harp down fall
And fled in tears from King and Queen and all.

LOST LOVE

His eyes are quickened so with grief,
He can watch a grass or leaf
Every instant grow; he can
Clearly through a flint wall see,
Or watch the startled spirit flee
From the throat of a dead man:
Across two counties he can hear,
And catch your words before you speak;
The woodlouse or the maggot's weak
Clamor rings in his sad ear;
And noise so slight it would surpass
Credence:—drinking sound of grass,
Worm-talk, clashing jaws of moth
Chumbling tiny holes in cloth:
The groan of ants who undertake
Gigantic loads for honor's sake,
Their sinews creak, their breath comes thin:
Whir of spiders when they spin,
And minute, whispering, mumbling, sighs
Of idle grubs and flies.
This man is quickened so with grief,
He wanders god-like or like thief
Inside and out, below, above,
Without relief seeking lost love.

LOUIS GOLDING

Louis Golding was born in Manchester, in November, 1895, and received his early education at Manchester Grammar School. War found him in 1914, taking him to Macedonia and France,

where he was chiefly occupied with educational work in various armies. On his return to England in 1919, he published his first volume of poems, *Sorrow of War*, and in the same year pursued his studies at Oxford. A succeeding collection, *Shepherd Singing Ragtime* (1921), and a novel, *Forward From Babylon* (1921) appeared while he was still an undergraduate.

The two volumes of poems appeared in America as one book entitled *Prophet and Fool* (1923). *Seacoast of Bohemia*, a satiric fantasy, followed in the same year. Since that time, Golding has traveled extensively through Europe and the Mediterranean, publishing two colorful volumes of travel, *Sunward* (1924) and *Sicilian Noon* (1925). *Day of Atonement* (1925) is a return to the somber and impressive background of *Forward from Babylon*.

Two lighter novels proved more popular than Golding's intenser work; *Store of Ladies* (1927) and *The Miracle Boy* (1928) provided him with a following in America and prepared the way for his welcome there. His adventures in Palestine were recorded in *Many Ways to Zion* (1928).

As a poet, Golding is gifted with a romantic, sometimes a rhapsodic, vision. Anger and pity find a fitful if not always controlled voice in his prose no less than in his rhymes.

PLOWMAN AT THE PLOW

He, behind the straight plow, stands
Stalwart; firm shafts in firm hands.

Naught he cares for wars and naught
For the fierce disease of thought.

Only for the winds, the sheer
Naked impulse of the year,

Only for the soil which stares
Clean into God's face, he cares.

In the stark might of his deed
There is more than art or creed;

In his wrist more strength is hid
Than the monstrous Pyramid;

Stauncher than stern Everest
Be the muscles of his breast;

Not the Atlantic sweeps a flood
Potent as the plowman's blood.

He, his horse, his plowshare, these
Are the only verities.

Dawn to dusk, with God he stands,
The Earth poised on his broad hands.

THE SINGER OF HIGH STATE

On hills too harsh for firs to climb,
Where eagle dare not hatch her brood,
On the sheer peak of Solitude,
With anvils of black granite crude
He beats austerities of rhyme.

Such godlike stuff his spirit drinks,
He made great odes of tempest there.
The steel-winged eagle, if he dare
To cleave these tracts of frozen air,
Hearing such music, swoops and sinks.

Stark tumults, which no tense night awes,
Of godly love and titan hate
Down crags of song reverberate.
Held by the Singer of High State,
Battalions of the midnight pause.

On hills uplift from Space and Time,
On the sheer peak of Solitude,
With stars to give his furnace food,
On anvils of black granite crude
He beats austerities of rhyme.

NIGHT ON THE FIELDS OF ENNA

(*Dove il sol tace.*—"Inferno")

Grass there doth not
Make reply faint as thought

To the bird-like din
Of the sun's cherubin.
And the birds themselves do
Blunder the branches through
Till the earth's root stains
With their knocked-out brains.
O the sun's silent and
Blood's on the land.
The birds die there
In the clotted air
And their wing-beats make no noise.
The four winds are lank lead
Suspended in a dead poise.
A scurf is on the mouth
Of west wind and south.
And the east and the north
Loll swollen tongues forth,
Into the blank immanence
Of the sun's silence.

Never Moloch and his peers,
Beelzebub, Ashtaroth,
So racked the cracked spheres
With the trumpets of their wrath
As this black hush hath rent
The collapsing firmament.

Dante, of thy charity
Restore sound unto sea,
Slake the winds their thirst.
Let the sun walk on
The split ramparts of this worst
Pandemonion.
Let the sun's cherubin,
Dante, once again begin
Their bird-like din.
Restore to birds their lost eyes,
To grass its little cries.

Leonard A. G. Strong was born on March 8, 1896, in the parish of Plympton, in Devon. "One of his parents" (to allow Mr. Strong to speak for himself) "is Irish, the other is half English and half Irish, so that he is fairly entitled to describe himself as a mongrel. He spent his childhood partly on Southern Dartmoor and partly on the borders between Dublin and Wicklow. From a preparatory school at Plymouth, he went with a scholarship to Brighton College, and thence, five years later, won an open Classical Scholarship at Wadham College, Oxford. Illness interrupting his career, he finally graduated in 1920 and now teaches at Summer Fields, a famous preparatory school near Oxford. Delicate health has confined him to a spectator's part in his favorite sports. Swimming is the only form of violent exercise he has been able to keep up—perhaps because, as legend has it, one of his ancestors, Teig Riarach O'Dowda, King of Connaught, captured and married a mermaid, thereby endowing his descendants with a taste for the sea!"

Strong is known in America chiefly through his *Dublin Days* (1921), a small volume of shrewd appraisals, in which satire nudges characterization. *The Lowery Road* (1923) depends for its effect less on humor and more on exaltation. Without sacrificing originality of speech, Strong summons the spirit of the English countryside in these terse Dartmoor lyrics. Besides the celebration of Strong's native Devon, the author has written poetry which is by no means local; his *Eight Poems*, privately distributed at Christmas 1923, show him capable of supporting himself in somewhat higher flights. Latterly Strong has distinguished himself as a shrewd compiler of anthologies of magazine verse. His first novel, *Dewer Rides*, was published in America as one of *Paper Books* in 1929, considerably enlarging his audience.

RUFUS PRAYS

In the darkening church
  Where but a few had stayed
At the Litany Desk
  The idiot knelt and prayed.

Rufus, stunted, uncouth,
  The one son of his mother.
"Eh, I'd sooner 'ave Rufie,"
  She said, "than many another:

"'E's useful about the 'ouse,
And so gentle as 'e can be.
An' 'e gets up early o' mornin's
And makes me a cup o' tea."

The formal evensong
Had passed over his head:
He sucked his thumb, and squinted,
And dreamed, instead.

Now while the organ boomed
To the few who still were there,
At the Litany Desk
The idiot made his prayer:

"Gawd bless Mother,
'N make Rufie a good lad:
Take Rufie to Heaven
'N forgive him when 'e's bad.

"'N early mornin's in Heaven
'E'll make mother's tea,
'N a cup for the Lord Jesus
'N a cup for Thee."

ZEKE

Gnarly and bent and deaf's a pos',
Pore old Ezekiel Purvis
Goeth crippin' slowly up the 'ill
To the Commoonion Survis.

And tappy, tappy up the haisle
Goeth stick and brassy ferule:
And Passen[1] 'ath to stoopy down
An' 'oller in ees yerole.

AN OLD WOMAN, OUTSIDE THE ABBEY THEATER

In this Theayter they has plays
On us, and high-up people comes
And pays to see things playin' here
They'd run like hell from in the slums.

[1] Parson.

THE MAD WOMAN OF PUNNET'S TOWN

A-swell within her billowed skirts
  Like a great ship with sails unfurled,
The mad woman goes gallantly
  Upon the ridges of her world.

With eagle nose and wisps of gray
  She strides upon the westward hills,
Swings her umbrella joyously
  And waves it to the waving mills.

Talking and chuckling as she goes
  Indifferent both to sun and rain,
With all that merry company:
  The singing children of her brain.

LOWERY COT

This is the house where Jesse White
Run staring in one misty night,
And said he seed the Holy Ghost
Out to Lowery finger-post.

Said It rised up like a cloud
Muttering to Itself out loud,
And stood tremendous on the hill
While all the breathing world was still.

They put en shivering to bed,
And in three days the man was dead.
Gert solemn visions such as they
Be overstrong for mortal clay.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

Edmund (C.) Blunden was born in 1896, and educated at Queen's College, Oxford. During the War he served as lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment, his bucolic poems being a direct revulsion from his experiences as a soldier. In 1916 he published three small volumes of pastorals which appeared as one book, *The Wagoner and other Poems*, in 1920. In the same year, he

edited, with Alan Porter, *The Poems of John Clare*, most of the verses being deciphered from a mass of old manuscript. Two years later, he published *The Shepherd* (1922), it being awarded the Hawthornden Prize for that year. He was Professor of English Literature at Tokio University from 1924 to 1927.

The most casual glance at his volumes discloses the fact that Blunden's use of the pastoral note is not, as it is with some of his contemporaries, a mere literary device. Here, the verse is gnarled and twisted as the bent trees of which he loves to write; there is rude country air in his lines and even the words have the smell of apple orchards. It has been objected that Blunden depends too often on unusual and obsolescent terms, but—as Robert Bridges wrote in a pamphlet on *The Dialectical Words in Blunden's Poems* (1921)—"his poetry cannot be imagined without them, and the strength and beauty of the effects must be estimated in his successes and not in his failures."

Blunden's subsequent poetry is milder; a softness but not a flabbiness of texture clothes *To Nature* (1923), *Masks of Time* (1925) and *Retreat* (1928). These verses, lacking the earthy flavor of the early poems, lose the spiciness that dialect confers, but they retain the contemplative quality of Blunden's mind and a dignity which inheres both in the tradition and in the man. *Near and Far* (1929), on the other hand, is composed of pretty trifles which can do Blunden's reputation no good. The contents, betraying a monotonous solemnity, are, as Peter Quennell remarked, "a drowsy methodical grinding out of familiar tunes."

In spite of his attainments, Blunden remained known to only a small circle until 1929. In that year he published his large prose work, *Undertones of War*, which was received with instant enthusiasm in Europe and America and took its place among such vivid anti-militaristic documents as Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Zweig's *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, and E. E. Cummings' *The Enormous Room*.

For the definitions appended to the following poems, thanks must be given to the late Robert Bridges, whose skill as etymologist can scarcely be overrated.

THE POOR MAN'S PIG

Already fallen plum-bloom stars the green
And apple-boughs as knarred [1] as old toads' backs
Wear their small roses ere a rose is seen;
The building-thrush watches old Job who stacks

[1] *Knarred*, a word meaning "wrinkled," is a country-cousin to our "gnarled."

The bright-peeled osiers on the sunny fence,
  The pent sow grunts to hear him stumping by,
And tries to push the bolt and scamper thence,
  But her ringed snout still keeps her to the sty.

Then out he lets her run; away she snorts
  In bundling gallop for the cottage door,
With hungry hubbub begging crusts and orts.[1]
  Then like a whirlwind bumping round once more;
Nuzzling the dog, making the pullets run,
  And sulky as a child when her play's done.

A COUNTRY GOD

When groping farms are lanterned up
  And stolchy [2] plowlands hid in grief,
And glimmering byroads catch the drop
  That weeps from sprawling twig and leaf,
And heavy-hearted spins the wind
  Among the tattered flags of Mirth,—
Then who but I flit to and fro,
With shuddering speech, with mope and mow,
  And glass the eyes of earth?

Then haunt I by some moaning brook
  Where lank and snaky brambles swim,
Or where the hill pines swartly look
  I whirry [3] through the dark and hymn
A dull-voiced dirge and threnody,
  An echo of the sad world's drone
That now appals the friendly stars—
O wail for blind brave youth, whose wars
  Turn happiness to stone.

[1] *Orts* are fragments or scraps of refuse.

[2] *Stolchy* is such an excellent onomatopoetic word that it scarcely needs explanation. But there is an old English verb *stolch:* "to tread down in wet land or mud."

[3] *Whirry* is another sound-word, not to be confused with "worry." It means "to fly rapidly with noise"—a combination of "whir" and "hurry."

How rang the cavern-shades of old
To my melodious pipes, and then
My bright-haired bergomask patrolled
Each lawn and plot for laughter's din:
Never a sower flung broadcast,
No hedger brished [1] nor scythesman swung,
Nor maiden trod the purpling press,
But I was by to guard and bless
And for their solace sung.

. . . . . .

But now the sower's hand is writhed
In livid death, the bright rhythm stolen,
The gold grain flatted and unscythed,
The boars in the vineyard, gnarled and sullen,
Havocking the grapes; and the pouncing wind
Spins the spattered leaves of the glen
In a mockery dance, death's hue-and-cry;
With all my murmurous pipes flung by
And summer not to come again.

THE BARN

Rain-sunken roof, grown green and thin
For sparrows' nests and starlings' nests;
Disheveled eaves; unwieldy doors,
Cracked rusty pump, and oaken floors,
And idly-penciled names and jests
Upon the posts within.

The light pales at the spider's lust,
The wind tangs [2] through the shattered pane:
An empty hop-poke spreads across
The gaping frame to mend the loss
And keeps out sun as well as rain,
Mildewed with clammy dust.

The smell of apples stored in hay
And homely cattle-cake is there.

[1] *Brished* is country dialect for "brush"—principally used in connection with trimming trees and hedges.

[2] *Tangs*—an old term (differing from our word meaning "taste") denoting a barb or a sting. Blunden uses it here as a verb.

Use and disuse have come to terms,
The walls are hollowed out by worms,
But men's feet keep the mid-floor bare
And free from worse decay.

All merry noise of hens astir
Or sparrows squabbling on the roof
Comes to the barn's broad open door;
You hear upon the stable floor
Old hungry Dapple strike his hoof,
And the blue fan-tail's whir.

The barn is old, and very old,
But not a place of spectral fear.
Cobwebs and dust and speckling sun
Come to old buildings every one.
Long since they made their dwelling here,
And here you may behold

Nothing but simple wane and change;
Your tread will wake no ghost, your voice
Will fall on silence undeterred.
No phantom wailing will be heard,
Only the farm's blithe cheerful noise;
The barn is old, not strange.

EASTERN TEMPEST

This flying angel's torrent cry
Will hurl the mountains through the sky!
A wind like fifty winds at once
Through the bedragoned kingdom runs,
And hissing rain slants icy stings
At many a wretch afield who clings
His cloak of straw, with glistening spines
Like a prodigious porcupine's.
The reptile grasses by his path
Wind sleek as unction from that Wrath
Which with its glassy claw uproots
The broad-leaved *kiri,* flays and loots
Torn and sprung sinews, leaves for dead
The young crops with the shining head,

While blotched blunt melons darkly dot
The slaughtered swathes like cannon-shot.
The lotus in the pond upheaves
Its sacred, slow, appealing leaves,
And many a bush with wrestling jerk
Defies the demon's murderous work—
Yet nature stares white-lipped, to read
In Chance's eye what desperate deed?
A kinder god discerns, replies,
And stills the land's storm-shouts to sighs;
The clouds in massy folds apart
Disclose the day's bright bleeding heart,
Huge plumes and scarves black-tossing wide
As if a Kubla Khan had died!
From flame to flame the vision glows,
Till all the pools of heaven unclose
The lotus-light, the hue, the balm
Of wisdom infinitely calm.

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

Sacheverell Sitwell, brother of Edith and Osbert Sitwell, was born in 1897 at Scarborough and educated at Eton. As soon as he was of military age, he joined the Grenadier Guards as second lieutenant. After the War he attended Balliol College, Oxford, for a short time, but came to London before completing his courses, confining his activities to literature.

From the first, his poetry was experimental, but even the early *The People's Palace* contained his particular gesture. *The Hundred and One Harlequins* (1922) and *The Thirteenth Caesar* (1924) are less dependent on his influences, although the accents of such dissimilar poets as Vachel Lindsay and T. S. Eliot arise from his pages. Here the youngest of the Sitwells displays a lively imagination, a delight in toying with the subject as well as distorting it, a glittering if sometimes too self-conscious cleverness.

His more recent work shows him milder in manner and idiom. Less distinctive than his strepitant sister and brother, he seems to be developing a more traditional vein. His larger efforts would seem to dispute this; "Canons of Giant Art" and "Doctor Donne and Gargantua" are exercises in the approved modern manner. But they are not the poet. Try as he will with all the resources

of the brain, his art is not in them. His art (and for that matter his heart) finds its response in unaffected song, a group of twenty-five lyrics being the core of *The Cyder Feast* (1927). Apart from a dissonance or two, an inverted image, a strained or dislocated adjective, these horticultural verses might have been written in the eighteenth century.

It is curious to note how the more modern "modernists" turn their eyes not to formless futurism, but to a precise past. Thus we find T. S. Eliot rediscovering Dryden and Lancelot Andrewes, Humbert Wolfe looting the Greek Anthology, Edith Sitwell turning from Gertrude Stein and Dr. Steiner to pen an introduction to the didactic rhymes of Jane Taylor. And here, in *The Cyder Feast*, in the midst of the "alchemy of dank leaves," one finds the youngest Sitwell writing "Four Variations upon William Browne of Tavistock," "Variation on a Theme by Robert Herrick," "Variation upon a Couplet of Alexander Pope," "An Adaptation from John Milton." Moreover most of the poems not adapted or "varied" betray accents of a period that is scarcely Sitwellian. "Tulip Tree" and "Kingcups" are two examples among many.

The irruption of a kind of architectural fancy is not unnatural in one who has established himself as an ardent appraiser if not an authority on the genesis of the rococo, embodied in his three volumes *Southern Baroque Art* (1924), *German Baroque Art* (1927) and *The Gothick North* (1929).

FOUNTAINS

This night is pure and clear as thrice refinèd silver.
Silence, the cape of Death, lies heavy
Round the bare shoulders of the hills.
Faint throbs and murmurs
At moments growing to a mutter, then subsiding,
Fill the night with mystery and panic.
The honey-tongued arguings of fountains
Stir the air with flutes and gentle voices.

The graven fountain-masks suffer and weep—
Curved with a smile, the poor mouths
Clutch at a half-remembered song
Striving to forget the agony of ever laughing,—
Laughing while they hear the secrets
Echoed from the depths of Earth beneath them.

This half-remembered song—
This flow of sad-restrainèd laughter
Jars with the jets of youthful water
Springing from the twisted masks,
For this is but the birth of water;
And singing joyfully
It springs upon the world
And wanders ceaselessly
Along its jeweled valleys to the sea,
Rattling like rolls of drums
The shells and pebbles down its bed.

The endless argument of water ceases,
A few drops fall heavily, splashing on the marble:
A Sultan with his treasures
Seeking to gain the goodwill of his love,
Pouring before her chains of crackling pearls
And weeping heavy jealous tears
Because she will not heed him.

THE RED-GOLD RAIN

(*Orange Tree by Day*)

Sun and rain at work together
Ripened this for summer weather;
Sun gave it color tawny red
And rain its life as though it bled;
In the long days full of fire
Its fruit will cool us when we tire.
Against the house-wall does it grow
With smooth stem like a fountain's flow,
Dark are its leaves, a colder shade
Than ever rock or mountain made;
When the wind plays soft they sing,
For here the bird's songs never ring,
Quite still the fruit that in a golden shower
Will fall one day to flood this tower.

"PSITTACHUS EOIS IMITATRIX ALES AB INDIS"—*Ovid*

The parrot's voice snaps out—
No good to contradict—
What he says he'll say again:
Dry facts, like biscuits,—

His voice and vivid colors
Of his breast and wings
Are immemorably old;
Old dowagers dressed in crimpèd satin
Boxed in their rooms
Like specimens beneath a glass
Inviolate—and never changing,
Their memory of emotions dead;
The ardor of their summers
Sprayed like camphor
On their silken parasols
Intissued in a cupboard.

Reflective, but with never a new thought
The parrot sways upon his ivory perch—
Then gravely turns a somersault
Through rings nailed in the roof—
Much as the sun performs his antics
As he climbs the aerial bridge
We only see
Through crystal prisms in a falling rain.

TULIP TREE

Whose candles light the tulip tree?
What is this subtle alchemy,
That builds an altar in one night
And touches the green boughs with light?
Look at the shaped leaves below
And see the scissor-marks they show,
As if a tailor had cut fine
The marking of their every line!

These are no leaves of prudery
Hiding what all eyes should see;
No Adam and no Eve lie hid
Below this leafy coverlid:
The long limbs of that flower-hid girl
Would need no leaves to twist and curl,
The markings of that leaf-hid boy
Want no flowers to mar and cloy.

And so these cut leaves and their lights
Live only for the tulip-rites
At this altar of bright fires
Sweet-scented lest their ardor tires;
Leaf, and flower, and scent are all
Alive for this lit interval:
Between two winters are they born
To make great summer seem forlorn.

KINGCUPS

When poetry walked the live, spring wood,
Hid, ghostlike, in the leaves' green hood
She came to a slant fence of sun,
Whose golden timbers, one by one,
Trod into a marsh's toils
And here she stayed her flowery spoils;
But pitying the marshes' plight
She shook her lap and wide and bright
Great kingcups to that waste she threw
Where nothing lived and nothing grew;
Now, where poetry passed, there stays
The light of suns, the fire of days,
And these cups for kings to hold
Make summer with their wide-eyed gold.

EDGELL RICKWORD

Edgell Rickword was born at Colchester, October 22, 1898, and, before he was twenty, contributed to *Oxford Poetry*. His first volume, *Behind the Eyes* (1921), gives evidence of a talent whose visual sensibility matches a delicately precise mind. After a series

of reviews for *The New Statesman*, Rickword published his excellent study of the remarkable French boy-poet *Rimbaud* (1924), and edited *The Calendar of Modern Letters* from 1925 to 1927.

INTIMACY

Since I have seen you do those intimate things
That other men but dream of; lull asleep
The sinister dark forest of your hair,
And tie the bows that stir on your calm breast
Faintly as leaves that shudder in their sleep.
Since I have seen your stocking swallow up,
A swift black wind, the pale flame of your foot,
And deemed your slender limbs so meshed in silk
Sweet mermaid sisters drowned in their dark hair,
I have not troubled overmuch with food,
And wine has seemed like water from a well;
Pavements are built of fire, grass of thin flames.
All other girls grow dull as painted flowers
Or flutter harmlessly like colored flies
Whose wings are tangled in the net of leaves
Spread by frail trees that grow behind the eyes.

RICHARD HUGHES

Richard Hughes was born in 1900 of a Welsh family settled in England. He was educated at Charterhouse School and Oriel College, Oxford, his first play, *The Sisters' Tragedy*, being produced in London in 1922 while Hughes was still an undergraduate. In the same year, his first volume of poems, *Gypsy-Night*, appeared and before he graduated he was poetry-critic to the London *Saturday Westminster* and contributor to leading periodicals. He traveled extensively in Europe, North Africa and America, often on foot, and has, he confesses, "a slight amateur knowledge of Balkan revolutions and seamanship."

Hughes began his career as a poet although his reputation was made by two dramas. The first of these has been mentioned; the other, composed in his twenties, was a comedy praised by Shaw and selected with works of Chekhov and Pirandello as "one of the three most important productions in London in seven years."

Gipsy-Night (1922) marked the début of a poet with acute sensibility, a precocious apprehension emphasized by the short

stories in *A Moment of Time* (1925). After a silence of three years, Hughes published his first full-length novel, *The Innocent Voyage* (1929), published in England as *A High Wind in Jamaica.* This tale is an accomplishment in an untried genre. Upon a basis of traditional melodrama, including pirates and kidnaping, Hughes has constructed a story wholly unexpected, an unromantic romance, where the psychological reënforces the fantastic and where the union of cut-throats and children is convincing, delicate and, at the same time, horrible. Modern writing has produced several techniques for dealing fancifully with the commonplace; Hughes has developed a realistic way of handling the extraordinary.

This gift of familiarizing the unusual is of paramount service to his poetry. Chekhov counseled writers to cease being insincere about the moon and say what they really felt about a rain-puddle. But, Hughes implies, one can also be actual, faithful to subject and self, when writing about the moon, or the mad immortal unicorn, or the elephant-swallowing roc, or inditing meditative and ecstatic odes to vision, or transfixing the windlike passing of Time. Such subjects brighten the pages of *Confessio Juvenis* (1926) which, as its title indicates, collects Hughes' early work. But if it is a poet's eye which rolls toward these strangenesses, it is his mind which carries them off in a fine frenzy.

Besides three privately printed volumes, Hughes is the author of some seven volumes. His collected *Plays* were issued in 1928 and his edition of John Skelton's poems appeared in 1924.

INVOCATION TO THE MUSE

Fair maiden, fair maiden,
  Come spin for me:
Come spin till you're laden
  Though hard it may be.

'Tis an honor and glory
  To be a king's maid,
Though (I'll not tell a story)
  You won't be well paid.

Aetat. 6

TRAMP

(*The Bath Road, June*)

When a brass sun staggers above the sky,
When feet cleave to boots, and the tongue's dry,

And sharp dust goads the rolling eye
Come thoughts of wine and dancing thoughts of girls:
They shiver their white arms, and the head whirls,
And noon light is hid in their dark curls;
Then noon feet stumble, and head swims,
Till out shines the sun, and the thought dims;
And death, for blood, runs in the weak limbs.

To fall on flints in the shade of tall nettles
Gives easy sleep as a bed of rose petals,
And dust drifting from the highway
As light a coverlet as down may.
The myriad feet of many-sized flies
May not open those tired eyes.

But the first wind of night
Twitches the coverlet away quite:
The first wind and large first rain,
Flickers the dry pulse to life again,
Flickers the lids burning on the eyes:
Come sudden flashes of the slipping skies:
Hunger, oldest visionary,
Hides a devil in a tree,
Hints a glory in the clouds,
Fills the crooked air with crowds
Of ivory sightless demons singing—
Eyes start: straightens back:
Limbs stagger and crack:
But brain flies, brain soars
Up, where the Sky roars
Upon the backs of cherubim:
Brain rockets up to Him.
Body gives another twist
To the slack waist-band;
In agony clenches fist
Till the nails bite the hand.
Body floats light as air,
With rain in its sparse hair.

Brain returns; and he would tell
The things he has seen well:

But Body will not stir his lips:
So Mind and Body come to grips
And deadly each hates the other
As his treacherous blood-brother.

Yet no sight, no sound shows
How the struggle goes.

I sink at last faint in the wet gutter;
So many words to speak that the tongue cannot utter.

LOVER'S REPLY TO GOOD ADVICE

Could you bid an acorn
When in earth it heaves
On Time's backward wing be borne
To forgotten leaves:
Could you quiet Noah's flood
To an essence rare,
Or bid the roaring wind
Confine in his lair:

Could round the iron shell
When the spark was in it
Hold gun-powder so well
That it never split:
Had you reins for the sun,
And curb and spur,
Held you God in a net
So He might not stir:

Then might you take this thing,
Then strangle it, kill:
By weighing, considering,
Conform it to will:
As man denied his Christ
Deny it, mock, betray—
But being Seed, Wind, God,
It bears all away.

ON TIME

Unhurried as a snake I saw Time glide
Out of the shape of his material frame:
I, who am part of Time's material name,
Saw that unhurried serpent quietly slide
Through a straight crack in his material side
Between a prince and a stone: flicker, and presently coil,
A small bright worm about a stalk of fennel;
While light stood still as spar, and smell
Spread like a fan, sound hung festooned, and toil
Rose balanced and patterned like a storied palace
Whose wild tons grapple in immovable grace;
While laughter sat on a rustic seat with tears
And watched the corn-sheaves lean across the plow:
Ah! then what wind across the nodding years!
What ecstasies upon the bough
Sang, like a fountain to its peers:
And in the meadows what deep-rooted men
Flowered their lovely faces in the grass,
Where death, like a butterfly of dark-colored glass,
Flitted and sipped, and sipped again!

ROY CAMPBELL

Roy Campbell was born in Durban, Natal, South Africa, in 1902. After marriage to Mary Garman in 1922, he became active—evidently too active—in South African affairs, for in 1926 he was compelled to come to England where he has since lived.

The Flaming Terrapin appeared in 1922. It was at once apparent that a poet of unusual vitality had come out of the Colonies. Campbell had chosen a huge theme and he had sufficient vigor to cope with it. The poem is a broad allegory: The ark of Noah plunges through terror and tempest carrying with it all of humanity. But, unlike the Biblical vessel, this ark does not merely float; it is pulled along, swept to its far goal by a tremendous saurian, a blood brother to Leviathan, the Flaming Terrapin, which is the symbol of the all-suffering, all-surviving power of persistence. It is this monster, the life-force, which brings the ark to a richer Ararat and (by implication) will bring mankind to a larger existence.

So much for the theme. The reader, however, is scarcely aware of the philosophic content, for the lines sweep him on at such a pace that he is conscious of little except the momentum of the verse, the bright concatenation of figures, and a general feeling of exuberance. The headlong speed may be accounted a vice, but Campbell's poetic vices and virtues are inseparable. Both proceed from prodigality; epithet and emotion rush forward in continual and creative excitement.

The Wayzgoose (1928) is a more local and less arousing work. Satirizing conditions in South Africa, it limits not only Campbell's audience but his own spirit, for this poet needs amplitude for his effects. The subsequent poetry is in the early, gustier vein. "Tristan Da Cunha" and "The Palm" display less alacrity and violence than *The Flaming Terrapin*, but contain much of its lavish energy. "The Palm" is particularly successful in its combinations of assonance and interior rhyming. In addition, the new poems have a condensed power, a sense of reserve which argues well for Campbell's future.

TRISTAN DA CUNHA

Snore in the foam: the night is vast and blind,
The blanket of the mist around your shoulders.
Sleep your old sleep of rock, snore in the wind,
Snore in the spray! The storm your slumber lulls,
His wings are folded on your nest of bowlders
As on their eggs the gray wings of your gulls.

No more as when, ten thousand years ago,
You hissed a giant cinder from the ocean—
Around your rocks you furl the shawling snow,
Half sunk in your own darkness, vast and grim,
And round you on the deep with surly motion
Pivot your league-long shadow as you swim.

Why should you haunt me thus but that I know
My surly heart is in your own displayed,
Round whom such wastes in endless circuit flow,
Whose hours in such a gloomy compass run—
A dial with its league-long arm of shade
Slowly revolving to the moon and sun.

My heart has sunk, like your gray fissured crags,
By its own strength o'ertoppled and betrayed:
I too have burned the wind with fiery flags,
Who now am but a roost for empty words—
An island of the sea whose only trade
Is in the voyages of its wandering birds.

Did you not, when your strength became your pyre,
Deposed and tumbled from your flaming tower,
Awake in gloom from whence you sank in fire
To find Antaeus-like, more vastly grown,
A throne in your own darkness, and a power
Sheathed in the very coldness of your stone?

Your strength is that you have no hope or fear,
You march before the world without a crown:
The nations call you back, you do not hear:
The cities of the earth grow gray behind you,
You will be there when their great flames go down
And still the morning in the van will find you.

You march before the continents: you scout
In front of all the earth: alone you scale
The masthead of the world, a lorn look-out,
Waving the snowy flutter of your spray
And gazing back in infinite farewell
To suns that sink, and shores that fade away.

From your gray tower what long regrets you fling
To where, along the low horizon burning,
The great swan-breasted seraphs soar and sing,
And suns go down, and trailing splendors dwindle,
And sails on lonely errands unreturning,
Glow with a gold no sunrise can rekindle.

Turn to the Night, these flames are not for you
Whose steeple for the thunder swings its bells:
Gray Memnon, to the tempest only true,
Turn to the night, turn to the shadowing foam,
And let your voice, the saddest of farewells,
With sullen curfew toll the gray wings home.

The wind your mournful syren haunts the gloom:
The rocks, spray-clouded, are your signal-guns
Whose stony niter, puffed with flying spume,
Rolls forth in grim salute your broadside hollow,
Over the gorgeous burials of suns,
To sound the tocsin of the storms that follow.

Plunge forward; like a ship to battle hurled,
Slip the long cables of the failing light,
The level rays that moor you to the world:
Sheathed in your armor of eternal frost,
Plunge forward, in the thunder of the fight
To lose yourself as I would fain be lost.

Exiled, like you, and severed from my race
By the cold ocean of my own disdain,
Do I not freeze in such a wintry space,
Do I not travel through a storm as vast
And rise at times, victorious from the main,
To fly the sunrise at my shattered mast?

Your path is but a desert where you reap
Only the bitter knowledge of your soul,
You fish with nets of seaweed in the deep
As fruitlessly as I with nets of rhyme,
Yet forth you stride: yourself the way, the goal,
The surges are your strides, your path is time.

Hurled by what aim to what tremendous range!
A missile from the great sling of the past
Your passage leaves its track of death and change
And ruin on the world: you fly beyond,
Leaping the current of the ages vast
As lightly as a pebble skims a pond.

The years are undulations in your flight
Whose awful motion we can only guess:
Too swift for sense, too terrible for sight,
We only know how fast behind you darken
Our days like lonely beacons of distress:
We know that you stride on and will not hearken.

Now in the eastern sky the fairest planet
Pierces the dying wave with dangled spear,
And in the whirring hollows of your granite
That vaster Sea, to which you are a shell,
Sighs with a ghostly rumor like the drear
Moan of the nightwind in a hollow cell.

We shall not meet again: over the wave
Our ways divide, and yours is straight and endless—
But mine is short and crooked to the grave:
Yet what of these dark crowds, amid whose flow
I battle like a rock, aloof and friendless—
Are not their generations, vague and endless,
The waves, the strides, the feet on which I go?

FROM "THE FLAMING TERRAPIN"

Part I

Maternal Earth stirs redly from beneath
Her blue sea-blanket and her quilt of sky,
A giant Anadyomene from the sheath
And chrysalis of darkness; till we spy
Her vast barbaric haunches, furred with trees,
Stretched on the continents, and see her hair
Combed in a surf of fire along the breeze
To curl about the dim sierras, where
Faint snow-peaks catch the sun's far-swiveled beams:
And, tinder to his rays, the mountain-streams
Kindle, and volleying with a thunder-stroke
Out of their roaring gullies, burst in smoke
To shred themselves as fine as women's hair,
And hoop gay rainbows on the sunlit air.
Winnowed by radiant eagles, in whose quills
Sing the swift gales, and on whose waving plumes
Flashing sunbeams ignite—the towering hills
Yearn to the sun, rending the misty fumes
That clogged their peaks, and from each glistening spire
Fling to the winds their rosy fleece of fire.
Far out to sea the gales with savage sweep

Churning the water, waken drowsy fins
Huge fishes to propel from monstrous sleep,
That spout their pride as the red day begins,
"We are the great volcanoes of the deep!"
Now up from the intense creative Earth
Spring her strong sons: the thunder of their mirth
Vibrates upon the shining rocks and spills
In floods of rolling music on the hills.
Action and flesh cohere in one clean fusion
Of force with form: the very ethers breed
Wild harmonies of song: the frailest reed
Holds shackled thunder in its heart's seclusion.
And every stone that lines my lonely way,
Sad tongueless nightingale without a wing,
Seems on the point of rising up to sing
And donning scarlet for its dusty gray!

How often have I lost this fervent mood,
And gone down dingy thoroughfares to brood
On evils like my own from day to day;
"Life is a dusty corridor," I say,
"Shut at both ends." But far across the plain,
Old Ocean growls and tosses his gray mane,
Pawing the rocks in all his old unrest
Or lifting lazily on some white crest
His pale foam-feathers for the moon to burn—
Then to my veins I feel new sap return,
Strength tightens up my sinews long grown dull,
And in the old charred crater of the skull
Light strikes the slow somnambulistic mind
And sweeps her forth to ride the rushing wind,
And stamping on the hill-tops high in air,
To shake the golden bonfire of her hair.

This sudden strength that catches up men's souls
And rears them up like giants in the sky,
Giving them fins where the dark ocean rolls,
And wings of eagles when the whirlwinds fly,
Stands visible to me in its true self
(No spiritual essence of wing'd elf

Like Ariel on the empty winds to spin).
I see him as a mighty Terrapin,
Rafting whole islands on his stormy back,
Built of strong metals molten from the black
Roots of the inmost earth: a great machine,
Thoughtless and fearless, governing the clean
System of active things: the winds and currents
Are his primeval thoughts: the raging torrents
Are moods of his, and men who do great deeds
Are but the germs his awful fancy breeds.

For when the winds have ceased their ghostly speech
And the long waves roll moaning from the beach,
The Flaming Terrapin that towed the Ark
Rears up his hump of thunder on the dark,
And like a mountain, seamed with rocky scars,
Crinkles white rings, as from its ancient sleep
Into a foam of life he wakes the Deep.
His was the crest that from the angry sky
Tore down the hail: he made the bowlders fly
Like balls of paper, splintered icebergs, hurled
Lassoes of dismal smoke around the world,
And like a bunch of crisp and crackling straws,
Coughed the sharp lightning from his craggy jaws.
His was the eye that blinked beyond the hill
After the fury of the flood was done,
And breaching from the bottom, cold and still,
Leviathan reared up to greet the Sun.
Perched on the stars around him in the air,
White angels rinsed the moonlight from their hair,
And the drowned trees into new flowers unfurled
As it sank dreaming down upon the world.
As he rolled by, all evil things grew dim.
The Devil, who had scoffed, now slunk from him
And sat in Hell, dejected and alone,
Rasping starved teeth against an old dry bone.

Before the coral reared its sculptured fern
Or the pale shellfish, swinging in the waves
With pointed steeples, had begun to turn
The rocks to shadowy cities—from dark caves

The mixed and drowsy poisons of the sea
Mixed their corrosive strength with horny stones,
And coaxed new substances from them to be
The ponderous material of his bones.
The waves by slow erosion did their part
Shaping his heavy bonework from the mass,
And in that pillared temple grew a heart
That branched with mighty veins, through which to pass
His blood, that, filtering the tangled mesh,
Built walls of gristle, clogged each hollow gap
With concrete vigor, till through bone and flesh
Flowed the great currents of electric sap.
While thunder clanging from the cloudy rack
With elemental hammers fierce and red,
Tempered the heavy target of his back,
And forged the brazen anvil of his head.

Freed from the age-long agonies of birth
This living galleon oars himself along
And roars his triumph over all the earth
Until the sullen hills burst into song.
His beauty makes a summer through the land,
And where he crawls upon the solid ground,
Gigantic flowers, exploding from the sand,
Spread fans of blinding color all around.
His voice has roused the amorphous mud to life—
Dust thinks: and tired of spinning in the wind,
Stands up to be a man and feel the strife
Of brute-thoughts in the jungle of his mind.
Bellerophon, the primal cowboy, first
Heard that wild summons on the stillness burst,
As, from the dusty mesa leaping free,
He slewed his white-winged broncho out to sea,
And shaking loose his flaming coils of hair,
Shot whistling up the smooth blue roads of air:
As he rose up, the moon with slanted ray
Ruled for those rapid hoofs a shining way,
And streaming from their caves, the sirens came
Riding on seals to follow him: the flame
Of their moon-tinseled limbs had flushed the dim
Green depths, and as when winds in Autumn skim

Gold acres, rustling plume with fiery plume,
Their long hair flickered skyward in the gloom,
Tossed to the savage rhythms of their tune.
Till, far across the world, the rising moon
Heard, ghost-like, in the embered evening sky
Their singing fade into a husky sigh,
And splashed with stars and dashed with stinging spray
The dandy of the prairies rode away!

That voice on Samson's mighty sinews rang
As on a harp's tense chords: each fiber sang
In all his being: rippling their strings of fire,
His nerves and muscles, like a wondrous lyre,
Vibrated to that sound; and through his brain
Proud thoughts came surging in a gorgeous train.
He rose to action, slew the grumbling bear,
Hauled forth the flustered lion from its lair
And swung him yelping skyward by the tail:
Tigers he mauled, with tooth and ripping nail
Rending their straps of fire, and from his track
Slithering like quicksilver, pouring their black
And liquid coils before his pounding feet,
He drove the livid mambas of deceit.
Oppression, like a starved hyena, sneaked
From his loud steps: Tyranny, vulture-beaked,
Rose clapping iron wings, and in a cloud
Of smoke and terror, wove its own dark shroud,
As he strode by and in his tossing hair,
Rippled with sunshine, sang the morning air.

Like a great bell clanged in the winds of Time,
Linking the names of heroes chime by chime
That voice rolled on, and as it filled the night
Strong men rose up, thrilled with the huge delight
Of their own energy. Upon the snows
Of Ararat gigantic Noah rose,
Stiffened for fierce exertion, like the thong
That strings a bow before its arrow strong
Sings on the wind; and from his great fists hurled
Red thunderbolts to purify the world.

THE PALM

Blistered and dry was the desert I trod
When out of the sky with the step of a god,
Victory-vanned with her feathers out-fanned,
The palm tree alighting my journey delayed
And spread me, inviting, her carpet of shade.
Vain were evasions, though urgent my quest,
And there as the guests of her lovely persuasions
To lie in the shade of her branches was best.
Like a fountain she played, spilling plume over plume in
A golden cascade for the winds to illumine,
Ascending in brilliance and falling in shade,
And spurning the ground with a tiptoe resilience
Danced to the sound of the music she made.
Her voice intervened on my shadowed seclusion
Like the whispered intrusion of seraph or fiend,
In its tone was the hiss of the serpent's wise tongue,
But soft as the kiss of a lover it stung—
"Unstrung is your lute? For despair are you silent?
Am I not an island in oceans as mute?
Around me the thorns of the desert take root;
Though I spring from the rock of a region accurst,
Yet fair is the daughter of hunger and thirst
Who sings like the water the valleys have nursed,
And rings her blue shadow as deep and as cool
As the heavens of azure that sleep on a pool.
And you, who so soon by the toil were undone,
Could you guess through what horrors my beauty had won
Ere I crested the noon as the bride of the sun?
The roots are my anchor struck fast in the hill,
The higher I hanker, the deeper they drill,
Through the red mortar their claws interlock
To ferret the water through warrens of rock.
Each inch of my glory was wrenched with a groan,
Corroded with fire from the base of my throne
And drawn like a wire from the heart of a stone:
Though I soar in the height with a shape of delight
Uplifting my stem like the string of a kite,
Yet still must each grade of my climbing be told
And still from the summit my measure I hold.

Sounding the azure with plummet of gold,
Partaking the strain of the heavenward pride
That soars me away from the earth I deride;
Though my stem be a rein that would tether me down
And fasten a chain on the height of my crown,
Yet through its tense nerve do I measure my might,
The strain of its curb is the strength of my flight:
And when by the hate of the hurricane blown
It doubles its forces with fibers that groan,
Exulting I ride in the tower of my pride
To feel that the strength of the blast is my own. . . .
Rest under my branches, breathe deep of my balm
From the hushed avalanches of fragrance and calm,
For suave is the silence that poises the palm.

The wings of the egrets are silken and fine,
But hushed with the secrets of Eden are mine:
Your spirit that grieves like the wind in my leaves
Shall be robbed of its care by those whispering thieves
To study my patience and hear, the day long,
The soft foliations of sand into song—
For bitter and cold though it rasp to my root,
Each atom of gold is the chance of a fruit,
The sap is the music, the stem is the flute,
And the leaves are the wings of the seraph I shape
Who dances, who springs in a golden escape,
Out of the dust and the drought of the plain,
To sing with the silver hosannahs of rain."

FREDERICK C. BODEN

Frederick C. Boden was born May 17, 1902, in Bogthorpe Road, Chesterfield. The son of a goods-porter on the L.M.S., he attended the Chesterfield Elementary School till the beginning of his 'teens and at thirteen became a miner. When his first volume was published at the age of twenty-four, Boden was still working at the pit-head, having chosen the night-shift which gave him time for reading by daylight.

Guy N. Pocock happened to see a few verses by the youth who had spent his boyhood crawling along underground passages two and a half feet high, and, anxious "that the poetry should stand

on its own merits and not attract a mere ephemeral attention from the fact that the author was a young miner," set about to have them published. As a result *Pit-Head Poems*, with a Preface by Arthur Quiller-Couch, appeared in 1927 and *Out of the Coal-Fields* in 1929.

Technically the verse is unoriginal and derivative. Boden has sipped the alkaline waters of Edward Thomas and drunk too deep of A. E. Housman's bitter wine. "Out of the Heart" might have come straight from Thomas' Pyrgo or Lapwater; "Hady Bells" and "The Dreamer" are musings of an industrialized Shropshire Lad; "The Man" is a (not wholly unconscious) rewrite of Housman's "The Night My Father Got Me." But if there is nothing startling in Boden's accent or philosophy, his lyrics attest a natural voice and ease of production. His poetry won him influential friends so that he graduated from the mine to a position at the University of Exeter. It will be interesting to hear what songs he will sing now that he is no longer at the coal-pit.

FAITH

Ye mixed for me the same strong brew
With which the poet Christ ye slew,
But as ye forced the goblet near,
The voice of Christ rang in my ear,
"Have faith, they know not what they do."
I took the goblet—drained it clear.

Ye whipped me thro' the windy town
And mocked me when the blood ran down;
Laughing to see my tears start,
Ye stood me in the filthy mart,
And put a serpent in my gown
And bade it eat into my heart.

Yea, cruel things ye did to see
If ye could kill this faith in me;
Ye called me fool and hung me high,
Sport for every passer-by,
And lo, in spite of all of ye,
The faith burns on and will not die.

THE BELL

Merrily once one Christmas morn,
I heard a bell say Christ was born,
And I knew it lied—I knew that bell
Could not speak truth tho' it cracked and fell.

Cruelly once with whip and blade
Christ was murdered ere I was made,
And ever since then, iron and high,
Christmas bells have done naught but lie.

PETER QUENNELL

Peter Quennell was born March 5, 1905, in Kent. He was educated at Berkhamstead Grammar School and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he spent two years, being co-editor of *Oxford Poetry*. He made "the customary pilgrimages" to Greece and the Balkans, and since 1927 has lived in London, overlooking the old Tyburn Road.

Poems (1926) appeared before Quennell was twenty-one years old, four of the poems being "very early"—"Procne," for example, having been written at the age of sixteen. Quennell's verse is wholly unlike that of his living compatriots, although American readers will detect a similarity to the verbal elegancies of Wallace Stevens. It is as near the abstract as verse can come and still depend on words. Here language flowers of itself, feeding automatically on its own air; image suggests image, and associations grow freely on seemingly unrelated associations. In "The Divers" and "Leviathan," among others, the poetry wanders far from common experience or recognizable emotions or, for that matter, its own subject. But it is never less than poetry. Although the figures flowing into each other have the uncertain, fluid outlines of dream pictures, the musical progression is clear.

It is as music, first of all, that Quennell's poetry succeeds. His accomplishment is the greater since, without the aid of rhyme or definite rhythm, he achieves melodies intangible but more original than lightly summoned tunes. The actors in his verse are vague, the happenings remote and unreal, yet the intent is never false and the effect is a set of nicely adjusted modulations and strange harmonics. It is, in essence, a poetry of shock, but shock without eccentricity, smoothed and almost without surprise.

As an essayist, Quennell has developed slowly but with increasing surety. His *Baudelaire and the Symbolists* (1930) contains five essays outlining the stream which sprang from Baudelaire and which swayed not only French literature but determined in no inconsiderable degree the course of English poetry during and after the Eighteen Nineties.

PROCNE

So she became a bird and bird-like danced
On a long sloe-bough, treading the silver blossom
With a bird's lovely feet,
And shaken blossoms fell into the hands
Of sunlight, and he held them for a moment
And let them drop.
And in the autumn Procne came again
And leapt upon the crooked sloe-bough singing
And the dark berries winked like earth-dimmed beads,
As the branch swung beneath her dancing feet.

THE DIVERS

Ah, look,
How sucking their last sweetness from the air
These divers run upon the pale sea verge;
An evening air so smooth my hand could round
And grope a circle of the hollow sky
Without a harshness or impediment.

Look now,
How they run cowering and each unknots
A rag, a girdle twisted on his loins,
Stands naked, quivered in the cool of night.

As boldest lovers will tire presently,
When dawn dries up a radiance on the limbs,
And lapse to common sleep,
To the deep tumult of habitual dreams,
Each sighing, with loosened limbs, as if regretfully,
Gives up his body to the foamless surge.

Water combs out his body, and he sinks
Beyond all form and sound.
Only the blood frets on,
Grown fearful, in a shallow dissonance.

Water strains on his hair and drums upon his flank,
Consumes his curious track
And straight or sinuous path
Dissolves as swift, impermanent as light.

Still his strange purpose drives him, like a beam,
Like the suspended shaft of cavern-piercing sun;
And, hardier still,
With wavering hands, divides the massive gloom,—
A vast caress through which he penetrates,
Or obscure death withdrawing
Veil upon veil,
Discovering new darkness and profounder terror.

"Consider you your loss,
For now what strength of foot or hand
Can take you by the narrow way you came
Through the clear darkness up again and up.
Watch a procession of the living days,
Where dawn and evening melt so soft together
As wine in water, or milk shed in water,
Filming and clouding into even dullness."

"Who weeps me now with pulse of noisy tears,
Who strikes the breast?
If I regret among the flowing weed,
My regret is
Not vocal, cannot pierce to hidden day,
Momentary, soon quenched, like a strangled flame."

LEVIATHAN

(*Second Section*)

A music met Leviathan returning,
While the still troubled waters of his passage
Danct every island like a lily head.
Through all the shadowed throats of the wide forest
His unnumbered monster children rode to greet him
On horses winged and dappled over like flowers.

Now huddled waves had lulled their bursting foam
And slight clouds laid their breasts upon the sea;
The sullen winds, head downward from the sky,
Solicited his movement on their viols.

And the palm trees, heat weary,
Chafing smooth limbs within a rinded shell,
Spoke of his coming with soft acclamation,
Like watchers long grown tired, languid and sorry:

"Look, how he comes"—as faint as whispering deer—
"What storm and state he brings." Then louder voices,
The unchaste turtles crying out with pleasure,
And badgers from the earth
Sprawled upon the rocks with animal laughter.

"The Cretan bull ferrying across the sea
Bore home no richer load;
In the reed forest of Eurotas' bank
That quivering swan, clapping strong wings together,
With harsh, sweet voice called out no keener marriage."

Then shrill response, as seeming from the air,
Invoking joy, summoning desire:

"Hither desires,
Coming as thick and hot as the press and hurry of blood
Striking the apse of the brain,
Ranging abroad, carrying your torches high,
Running as light and remote as a scattered cast of pearls."

Then antic spirits from the tulip trees:

"We must have tumblers like a wheel of fire.
We must have dancers moving their suave hands:
The tumblers strung backward like a hoop
Until they thrust vermilioned cheeks between their knees.
And the intricacy
Of sweet involving gayety,
And wine to warm our innocence,
Music to sooth the prickled sense,
Sounding like water or like ringing glass."

*

The mitered Queen of Heaven stirred on her broad, low throne,
Setting the lattice just so much ajar
That wandering airs from earth should cool the room,
Peered down on more-than-Leda and smoothed her wrinkled snood,
Crying to her Father-Spouse—"Dear Lord, how sweet she looks."
The clumsy hierarchies,
Wearied by their continual task of praise,
Rested wide heifer eyes upon her fallen lids.
Islanded in stars,
Even the keen Intelligences turned away
From the mathematic splendour of the spheres' incessant rolling chime.

Himself, the Father moved,
Traditional and vast,
Remembering fresher years,
Might have inclined his steeply pinnacled head,
But his more zealous son,
As neat as Thammuz, with smooth, pallid cheeks,
Sensing an evil, shut the casement fast.

*

But I, remembering Atlantis, wept,
Remembering her paths and unswept flowers,
Clean beaches, patterned by a light sea wrack,
And the ruined halcyon nests that came on shore.

Tears, in their freedom, cloud the eyes,
Drowsing the sense.
Honey and poppy equally mixed together,
They cannot drug away or curtain off with sleep
Such pitiless disharmony of shapes.

LOUIS MacNEICE

Louis MacNeice, one of the youngest of the Oxonians, attended Merton College and attracted attention as an undergraduate with a group of poems in 1928. With Stephen Spender, he was co-editor of *Oxford Poetry, 1929*, a collection which presented some twenty other youthful poets.

It is too early to appraise Louis MacNeice, especially on the basis of a few poems. But it is evident that his work, although influenced by Edith Sitwell and other contemporaries, reveals an alert mind and an idiom to match. "Cradle Song" is not the only poem which mingles imaginative power and rhyming piquancy.

CRADLE SONG

The clock's untiring fingers wind the wool of darkness
And we all lie alone, having long outgrown our cradles
(Sleep, sleep, Miriam)
And the flames like faded ladies always unheeded simper
And all is troubledness.

Soft the wool, dark the wool
Is gathered slowly, wholly up
Into a ball, all of it.

And yet in the back of the mind, lulled all else,
There is something unsleeping, un-tamperable-with,
Something that whines and scampers
And like the ladies in the grate will not sleep nor forget itself,
Clawing at the wool like a kitten.

Sleep, sleep, Miriam.
And as for this animal of yours
He must be cradled also.
That he may not unravel this handiwork of forgetfulness.
That he may not philander with the flames before they die.

The world like a cradle rises and falls
On a wave of confetti and funerals
And sordor and stinks and stupid faces
And the deity making bored grimaces.

Oh what a muddle he has made of the wool,
(God will tomorrow have his hands full),
You must muzzle your beast, you must fasten him
For the whole of life—the interim.

Through the interim we pass
Every one under an alias
Till they gather the strands of us together
And wind us up for ever and ever.

The clock's fingers wind, wind the wool of Lethe,
(Sleep, sleep, Miriam)
It glides across the floor drawn by hidden fingers
And the beast droops his head
And the fire droops its flounces
And winks a final ogle out of the fading embers
But no one pays attention;

This is too much, the flames say, insulted,
We who were once the world's beauties and now
No one pays attention
No one remembers us.

STEPHEN SPENDER

Stephen Spender was born February 28, 1909, of mixed German, Jewish and English origins; his mother was Violet Schuster, his father was Harold Spender, the journalist. As a child he was especially interested in painting; at seventeen he supported himself by printing chemists' labels on his own press. At nineteen he attended University College, Oxford, but, finding university training alien to his temperament, did not complete his courses.

Spender's poetry withholds little; its technique, like its emotion, is forthright, self-declared. Moreover, the verse is free, free not in form but in range and spirit. In his eighteenth year, Spender printed a small volume, *Nine Experiments* (1928). At twenty he had written a quantity of poems which remarkably concealed his youth. But Spender's compositions are propelled by something deeper than energetic youth; he is fecund, not merely facile. An imagination, and a fiery one, is at play in such poems as "A Whim of Time," "Old Wives in March," "Farewell in a Dream," "Winter Landscape" and "Epilogue."

His influences are complex and far to seek. He seems to owe something to Anna Wickham, a little to Gerard Hopkins. What he may do is a matter for much speculation. But whether maturity ripens or stunts his gifts, Spender is already an arresting if practically unknown poet. His *Poems* (1933) may well establish him.

FAREWELL IN A DREAM

Now shout into my dream. These trumpets snored
Less golden by my side, when you were there. . . .

It is no reason now to think me coward
That, being insulted by a gamekeeper,
I hung my head, or looked into the air:
Thrusting between the peaks without a word,
Buttressed against the winds, or like a sword,
Then you were undisputed conqueror.

But dragged into this nightmare symphony
Of drum and tempest surging in my head,
Faced by these symbols of reality
You showed as one most pitifully naked.
I hailed your earth. Salute my Hades too.
Since we must part, let's part as heroes do.

STATISTICS

Lady, you think too much of speeds,
Pulleys and cranes swing in your mind;
The Woolworth Tower has made you blind
To Egypt and the pyramids.

Too much impressed by motor-cars
You have a false historic sense.
But I, perplexed at God's expense
Of electricity on stars,

From Brighton pier shall weigh the seas,
And count the sands along the shore:
Despise all moderns, thinking more
Of Shakespeare and Praxiteles.

OLD WIVES IN MARCH

Round fires sit
Old wives, and knit.
Talk together.
Winter weather
Dull as they
Sleeps in gray
All outside
Where seeds hide.
But the spell
Will break, they tell. . . .

March will come
With a drum,
A lioness;
Or progress
Like a lamb
From her dam
To a sheep
Fat as sleep.
Then the Spring
Loud will sing
As any kettle.

The snug petal
Will burst forth,
Show the froth
Underneath:
Wives' smug death
Then will cease:
Spring will tease;
They will rise,
Fire in eyes.

March may come
With a drum
Loud as these
Bursting trees
Or like a lamb.
But the dam
Too, will know
This is so.
Wives won't sit
Then, and knit.

WINTER LANDSCAPE

Come home with white gulls waving across gray
Fields. Evening. A daffodil West.
Somewhere in clefts of rock the birds hide, breast to breast

I warm with fire. Curtain shrouds dying day.
Alone. By the glowing ember
I shut out the bleak-tombed evenings of November.

And breast to breast, those swans. Sheep huddle and press
Close. Each to each. Oh,
Is there no herd of men like beasts where man may go?

Come home at last; come, end of loneliness
Sea. Evening. Daffodil West.
And our thin dying souls against Eternity pressed.

A WHIM OF TIME

A whim of time, the general arbiter,
Proclaims the love instead of death of friends.
Under the domed sky and athletic sun
The three stand naked, the new, bronzed German,
The young communist and myself, being English.
Yet to unwind the traveled sphere ten years
And two take arms, spring to a ghostly posture:
Or else roll on the thing a further ten
And the poor clerk with world-offended eyes
Builds with red hands his heaven; makes our bones
A necessary scaffolding to peace.

Now I suppose that the once-envious dead
Have learnt a strict philosophy of clay
After these centuries, to haunt us no longer
In the churchyard, or at the end of the lane,
Or howling at the edge of the city
Beyond the last bean-rows, near the new factory.
Our fathers enemies, yet lives no feud
Of prompting Hamlet on the kitchen stair,
There falls no shade across our blank of peace
Being together struck across the path
Or taper finger threatening solitude.

Our father's misery, the dead man's mercy,
The cynic's mystery, weaves a philosophy—
That history of man traced purely from dust
Is lipping skulls on the revolving rim
Or posture of slavery with the granite head bowed:
These, risen a moment, joined or separate,
Fall heavily, then are always separate.

A stratum scarce reckoned by geologers,
Sod lifted, turned, slapped back again with spade.

EXILE

As long as I can hope to see you come
Still to my home, or I go to your home,
I am not whole, and therefore I declare
That where we parted, my heart parted there.
One part is lost, and never shall be found:
Totally separate, mortal is my wound.

My Soul, barred out into this loneliness,
Adopts no tragic motto of distress.
Oh, no, unfeeling lover, this will prove
The perfect amputation of our love:—
I, poet, have stood and watched it half the night
Only regard the moon and cold moonlight
Till head and brain, unused to silences,
Emptied of you, are filled with stars and trees.

EPILOGUE

Time is a thing
That does not pass through boredom and the wishing,
But must be fought with, rushed at, over-awed,
And threatened with a sword:

For that prodigious voyager, the Mind,
Another self doth find
At each hour's stage, and riven, hewn and wrought
Cannot foretell its port.

Let heart be done, shut close the whining eyes,
And work, or drink, or sleep, till life defies
Minute, month, hour and day
Which are harrowed, and beaten, and scared away,

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